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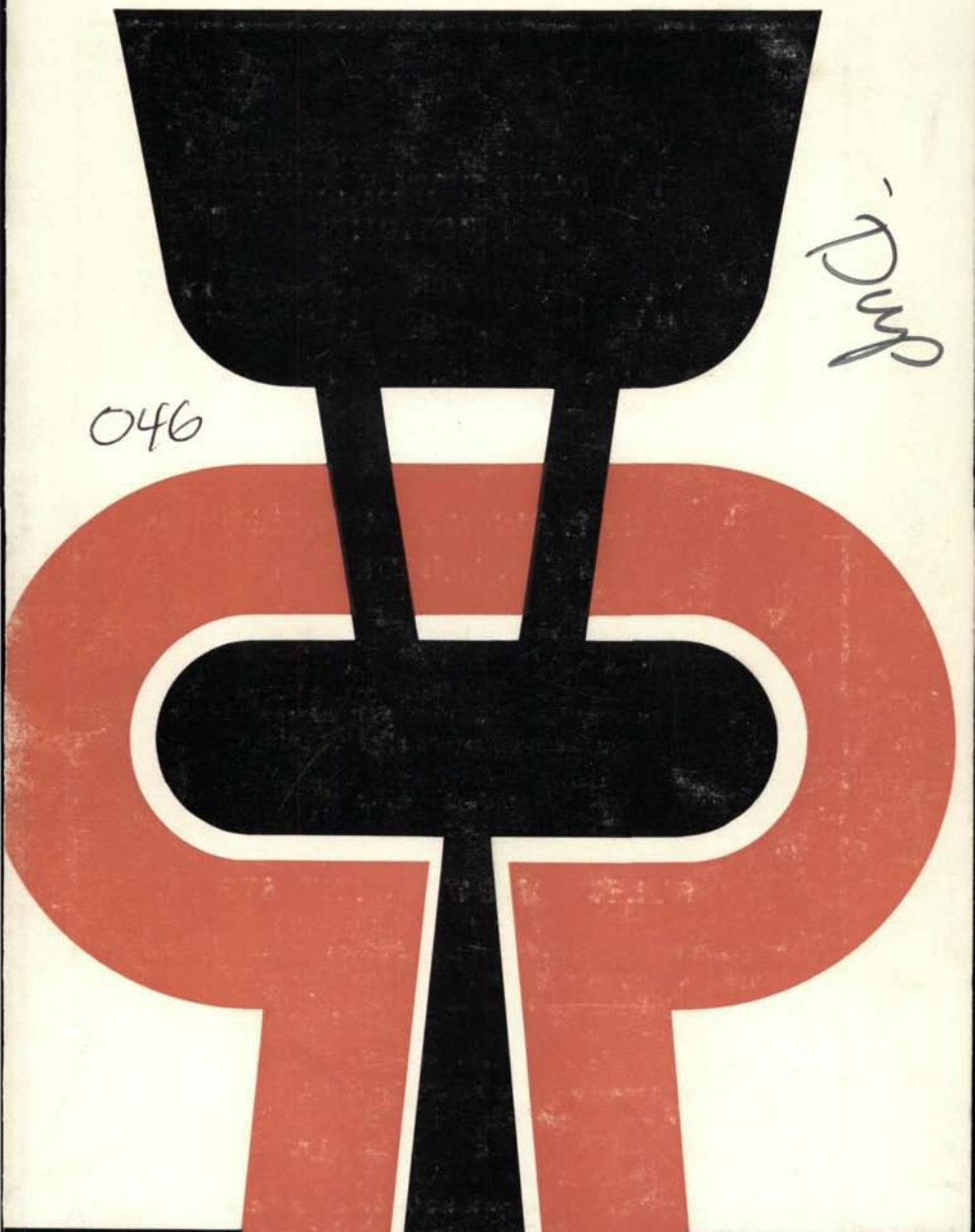

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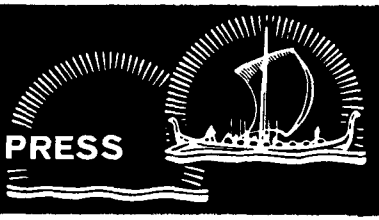

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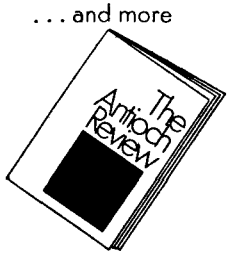

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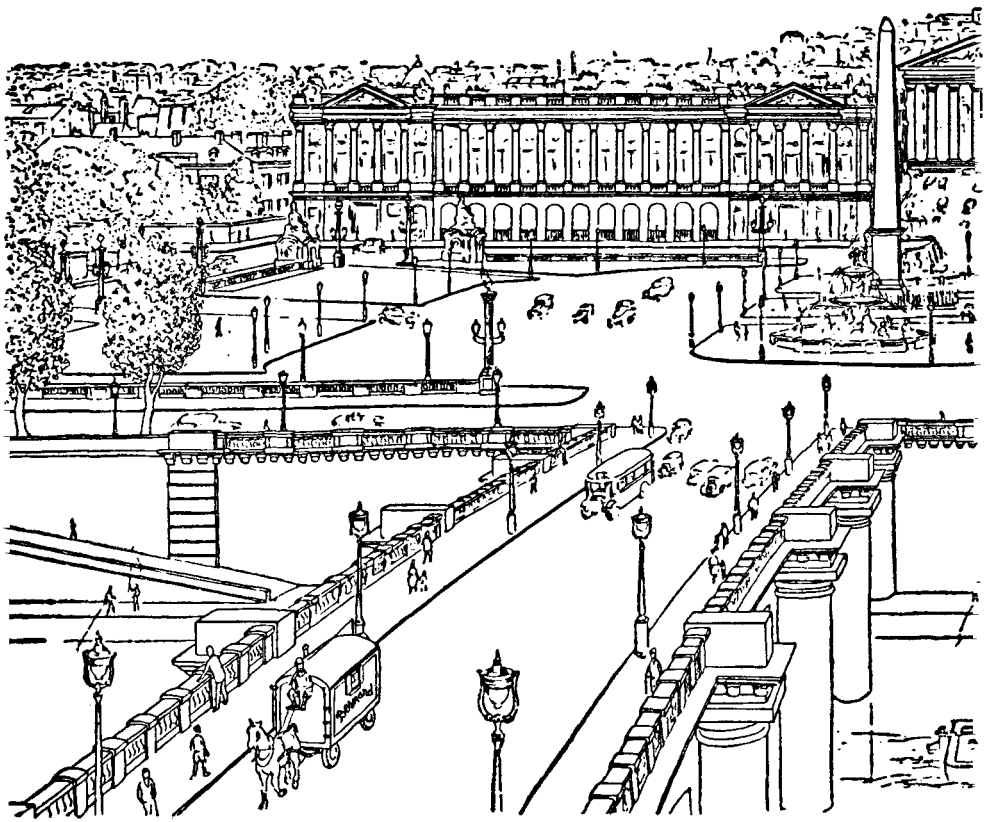

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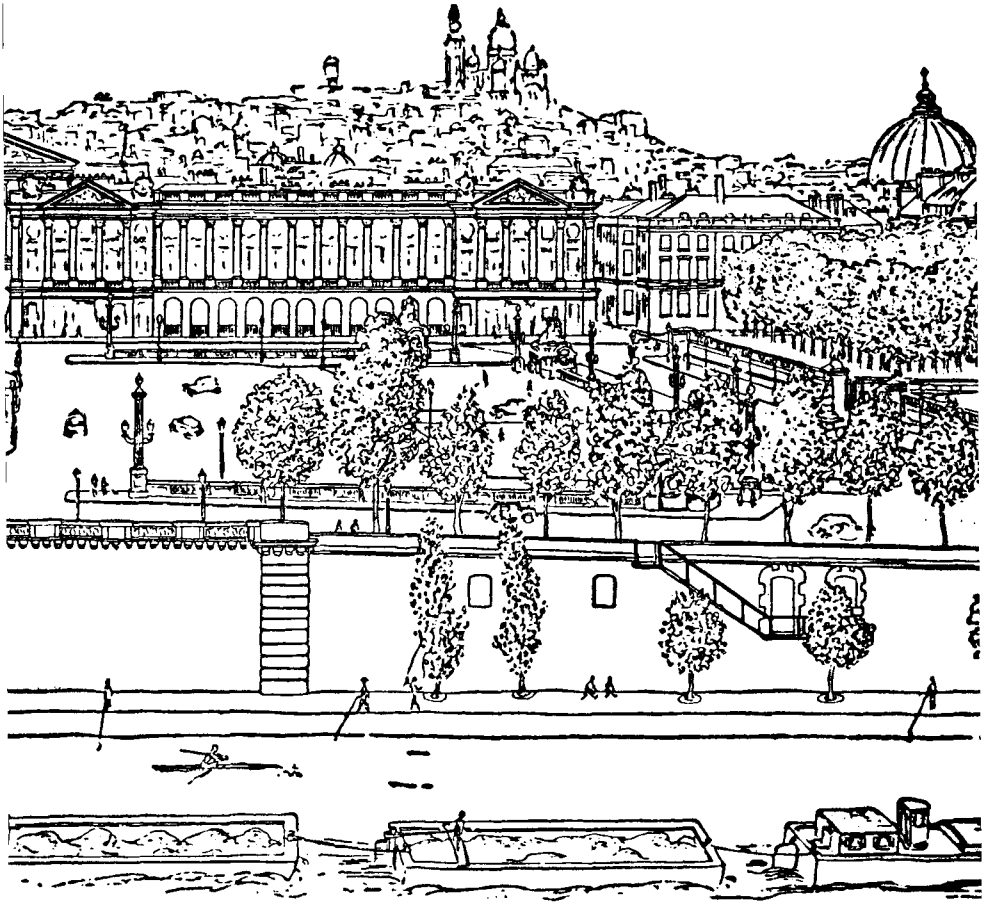

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The Master of the Milford Altarpiece

Thomas M. Disch

What blacks and whites, what greys and purplish browns!

Bernard Berenson

Often enough Rubens may have quietly taken stock of all previous Italian art at this time, especially of the Venetian school, the knowledge of which had had so little influence on other northern artists. Though scarcely one immediate reminiscence of Titian can be discovered in Rubens's later work, whether of objects or of single forms, he had learned to see with Titian's eyes. He found the whole mass of Tintoretto's work intact, and much of it still free of the later blackening of the shadows which makes it impossible for us to enjoy him, but he may well have been repelled by the touch of untruthfulness and lack of reticence in him, and by the crudity of a number of his compositions. It is obvious that his deepest kinship by far was with Paolo Veronese; here two minds converged, and there have been pictures which might be attributed to either, for instance a small, but rich "Adoration of the Magi" which the present writer saw in early, uncritical years and has never been able to forget.

Jacob Burckhardt

I

I can hear him, in the next room but one, typing away. An answer to Pamela's Special Delivery letter perhaps? Or lists of money-making projects. Possibly even a story, or a revised outline for *Popcorn*, in which he will refute the errors of our age.

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Wishing to know his age, I went into the communicating room. "Jim?" I called out. "Jim?" Not in his office. I called downstairs. No reply. I returned here, to this desk, this typewriter. Now there are noises: his voice, the slow expository tone that he reserves for Dylan.

He is 23. He will be 24 in December. For his age he is fantastically successful. I envy his success, though it isn't a personal thing—I can envy almost anyone's. I need constant reassurance. I crave your admiration. Is candor admirable? Is reticence even more admirable? I want to read this to someone.

Chip said, on the phone last night, that Algis Budrys called him the world's greatest science-fiction writer. I certainly did envy that. Jane said afterward that Chip is coming up here at the end of the week, possibly with Burt. (Burt?) Marilyn is still in San Francisco. I felt resentful.

I don't think I am alone in being obsessed with the idea of success. We all are. But though we may envy the success of our friends, we also require it. What kind of success would we be, if our friends were failures?

This isn't the story. This is only the frame.

* *

Pieter Saenredam

Pieter Jansz. Saenredam; painter of church interiors and topographical views.

Born at Assendelft 9 June 1597, son of the engraver, Jan Saenredam. He went as a child to Haarlem and became a pupil in May 1612 of Frans Pietersz. de Grebber, in whose studio he remained until 1622. In 1623 he entered the painters' guild at Haarlem, and spent most of his life there. He was buried at Haarlem, 31 May 1665.

He was in contact with the architects Jacob van Campen and Salomon de Bray, and perhaps also Bartholomeus van Bassen. He was one of the first architectural painters to repro-

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duce buildings with fidelity (that is to say in his drawings; in his pictures accuracy is often modified for compositional reasons).

In his bedroom, which also served him as a studio, the curtains were always drawn. The cats performed ovals and sine curves in the bedclothes, a gray cat, a calico cat. Most of the furniture has been removed. The remaining pieces are placed against the wall.

The pleasures of iconoclasm. Destruction as a precondition of creation. Our burning faith.

The same painting over and over again. The high vaults and long recessions. The bare walls. The slanting light. Bereft of figures. (Those we see now have, for the most part, been added by other hands.) Nude. White.

He opened his present. Each box contained a smaller box. The last box contained a tin of Mixture No. 79, burley and Virginia. From that young scapegrace, Adriaen Brouwer (1605–1638).

It was an exciting time to live in. Traditions were crumbling. Fortunes were made and destroyed in a day.

The columns in the foreground have been made to appear much wider and taller, and the arches borne by them have been suppressed.

* *

His first letter:

RFD 3
Iowa City, Iowa
May 66

Dear Mr Disch—
Twenty minutes ago I finished THE GENOCIDES. And should have finished it days ago, but I kept drawing it out, going back over things, taking it a few pages at a time: because I didn't want it to be over with, sure, but mainly because I felt there was so much to take in—the structure, the pitch and tone of the narrative, the interflow of situations—and I wanted to give myself every chance I could...

From a letter two months later:

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...I am touched, Tom, by your extremely kind offer. To show my things to Moorcock. If they were only good stories, I'd take you up on it in a minute. But they're not, and I know it, which makes things different, almost embarrassing. But I may still put you in the compromising position, after thinking it over a while. I *could* use the sale (money, ego-boost, a beginning), and some of 'em aren't really *that* bad... and so on. But for now: I thank you very much. No way of expressing my gratitude—not only for the offer, but for your proffered friendship as well, your demonstrated openness...

And this, when I had asked him for a self-portrait:

His Whilom. Born in Helena, Arkansas. Parents uneducated. Spoiled because was so hard to conceive him, wrecked mother's health to bear him against the advice of doctors. One brother, seven years older; philosopher, Ph. D., teacher. Spent his youth on banks of Twain's Mississippi and in Confederate woods banking his small town. Became interested in conjuring when about twelve, an interest which persists. During high school edited some small magic mags, composed and formed chamber groups, took music lessons (against his parents' wishes, who thought playing in the band was enough, and irregardless of their lack of funds), had few friends. Spent summer between 11th and 12th grade doing independent research under guide of National Science Foundation, it being his ambition at that time to become a biochemist. Was oppressed that summer by the routine boredom of checks and balances, began to write poetry under the inspiration of cummings. In his 12th school year, wrote plays, directed plays, acted in plays, won dramatics prizes, became very depressed about not having the money to go to Princeton, became a dandy and discovered girls. Decided he was a poet.

The Exterior Symbolic. Am tall, very thin with a beer belly and matchstick legs. A disorder of the lower back has left me slightly stooped and given me a strange, quite unique walk. Wear wire frame glasses. Dress in either corduroy coat or black suit, with dark or figured or flowered shirt and black or figured tie. An angular, long face. Black curly hair that sticks out like straw and generally needs a cutting.

* *

Aedicule

The enclosing planes of walls, floor, ceiling. Subsidiary planes in tiers supported by the vertical members—posts, legs, brackets. A light bulb hangs from the ceiling. His room is

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characterized by rectilinearity. He unpacks his boxes and arranges the books on shelves, tacks prints to the walls, disposes of his clothing into drawers.

Without are trees, weeds, grasses, haystacks, cathedrals, crowds of people, rain, bumps, animals ground into meat, billboards, the glare, conversations, radiant energy, danger, hands, prices, mail, the same conversations.

The artist is obliged to structure these random elements into an order of his own making. He places the ground meat in the icebox, arranges the crowds of people into drawers. He carves a smaller church and places it in the larger church. Within this artificial structure, each figure, isolated in its own niche, appears transfigured. Certain similarities become apparent. More and more material is introduced. New shelves must be built. Boxes pile up below the steps. The sentences swell from short declarative statements into otiose candelabra. Wax drips onto the diapered floor. Styles conflict. Friends drop in for a chat and stay on for the whole weekend. At last there is nothing to be done but scrap the whole mess and start from scratch.

Whitewash. Sunlight slanting across bare walls. Drawn curtains. Vermeer's eventless studio.

He paints a picture of the table and the chair. The floor. The walls. The ceiling. His wife comes in the door with a plate of doughnuts. Each doughnut has a name. He eats "Happiness." His wife eats "Art." The door opens. Their friend Pomposity has come for a visit.

II

Yesterday, all told, he got three letters from Pamela. Passion that can express itself so abundantly, though it may forfeit our full sympathy, is a wonderful thing to behold. Given the occasion, how readily we all leap into our buskins! And if we are not given the occasion outright, we will find it somehow. Madame Bovary, c'est nous!

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When every high utterance is suspect, we must rely on surfaces, learn to decode the semaphore of the gratuitous, quotidian event.

Oh, the semaphore of the gratuitous, quotidian event—that's beautiful.

. . . . . .

For a long while I pressed my head against my purring IBM Executive and tried to think of what constituted, in our lives here, a gratuitous event. There seemed far too much significance in almost anything I could remember of yesterday's smallest occasions. I returned most often to:

Raking leaves. Not, conscientiously, into a basket for burning, but over the edge of the escarpment. Like sweeping dust under a rug. Jim came out on the porch to announce a phone call from my brother Gary. He has been readmitted to Canada with immigrant status. Then, back to my little chore. Jim said he hates to rake leaves. "Because it reminds you of poems in *The New Yorker*?" I asked. He laughed. No, because it reminds him of his childhood. Weeding the towering weeds in the back lawn, unmowed since mid-August. The two most spectacular weeds I tamped into a coffee can and set beside our other plants on the table in the bay of the library.

Strings of hot peppers, predominantly red, hanging unconvincingly on the pea-soup kitchen wall. Jane's handicraft. Staring at them as I gossiped with Jim. About? Literature, probably, and our friends.

Judy bought a steak, and Jane made beef stroganoff and a Caesar salad, both exemplary. The flavor of the sauce, the croutons' crunch.

Chess with Jim before dinner, with Jane after I'd washed the dishes.

Jane cut Jim's hair. Dylan was skipping through the scattered curls, so I swept them up and put them in the garbage.

At what point was I happiest yesterday: as I raked leaves and washed dishes or when I was writing this story? At what point was Jane happiest? At what point was Jim happiest?

Was Jane happier than Jim? Was I happier than either? If not, were both, or only one, happier than me? Which?

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I spend too much time lazing about indoors. I overeat. I smoke a package of cigarettes every day. I masturbate too often. I am not honest with myself. How, then, can I be expected to be honest about others?

Happiness is not important.

* *

The Conversion of St. Paul

The acquisition of certain knowledge (as Augustine shows us) is possible and men are bound to acknowledge this fact. The knowledge of God and of man is the end of all the aspirations of reason, and the purification of the heart is the condition of such knowledge.

The city is divided by schisms, as by innumerable rivers. His single room on Mississippi Avenue overlooks an endless genealogy of errors, sparrows, roofs. He has, by preference, few friends. He reads, each evening, of the great dispute over the nature of the Trinity. Demons in the form of moths tickle the bare soles of his feet. He fills his notebooks with theories, explanations, refutations, apologies—but nothing satisfies him. Of what solace is philosophy when each sequent hour reveals new portents of a sure and merited destruction, innumerable portents?

He cannot endure the strength of these emotions.

He writes:

To be happy man must possess some absolute good: this is God. To possess God is to be wise. But none can possess God without the Son of God, who says of Himself, I am the truth. The truth namely is the knowledge-principle of the highest, all-embracing order, which, as absolutely true, produces the truth out of itself in a like essential way. A blessed life consists in knowing by whom we are led to the truth, in what we attain to the truth, and how we are united to the highest order.

That much seemed to be clear.

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Often (of this he did not write) the walls of the room warped. The old man from next door came and stared at him as he lay there in the bed. Crook-backed and dirty (a magician probably): the name "Sabellius" burnt into the gray flesh of his high forehead.

In the churches, the gilded sculptures of Heresy and Sedition. Plastic dissembling itself as trees, weeds, grasses; simulating entire parks. The seeming virtues of his friends were only splendid vices. Their faces were covered with giant worms.

He distinguished between the immediate and the reflective consciousness, which concludes itself in unity, by the most perfect form of the will, which is love. Does the Holy Ghost proceed from the communion of the Father and the Son?

Explain the hypostatis of Christ. Tell me you love me. Define your terms.

He fell on his back and saw, in the clouds, the eye of the whale. He saw the river burning and his friends destroyed.

And no one listens to him. No one. No one.

* *

An excerpt from his letter of Sept 66:

The large, looming discovery: Samuel R. Delany. I had read a few of his books and been quite impressed and assumed he had been writing for three hundred years and was roughly ten million years old. God, I should have known (and if I'd read the jacket notes would have)... by the time he was 22, he'd had four books published. The last three of these are a trilogy, and his best work. He's about 24/25 now, with eight books. And he's beginning to think about shorter work... "Chip" has the strongest, most vital personality I've discovered in the sf clan. That young, and writing like that! (This is the larger part of my current depression—that he does it so much better than I.) Read his books and you drown in poetry.

And this, from a letter to his wife:

Glad to hear that you and Tom are getting along so well and things are working out; also, of course, *very* glad to hear that you're working. I'm really damned pleased that you like him so much. Tom is a fan-

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tastic influence on everyone he comes near. I find it difficult to be with him for more than a few minutes without having the urge to get right to work on something better than anything I've ever done before. I don't know if I have mentioned it, but Tom is beyond doubt the only person I know to whom I'd apply words like 'genius'. In ten years or so, he's going to be quite, quite well-known and quite, quite respected. What is he, and what are you working on; and are you, is he, serious about the poetry magazine? I hope so.

That radiant quality of mind is something he shares with Mike, with John Sladek, and with Pamela.

And then (though not chronologically):

I'm constantly amazed, Tom, at the similarity of our tastes, expression, and ambitions. If we were French or poets, I'm certain we'd think it necessary to form a "school" about ourselves: arguing with the establishment and among ourselves, bitching at traditions, j'accusing all over the place, emitting manifestoes, issuing bulls, belching intent everywhere we walked, excreting doctrine and should-be's, generating slogans, shouting what we collectively think, and having a hell of a lot of fun doing it all...I don't think anyone has ever done that in sf, have they? Poetry, art, music, other writing reeks with such focused groups (I'm led to think of this by just having read a book on contemporary poetry, in which the movements of the projective-verse poets and deep-image poets were detailed; it sounded like so much fun, and everyone concerned got so much out of it, and you can't argue that they whambang turned the tides of poetry).

* *

A Schematic Diagram

Linda began her affair with Gene in high school. Sometimes Linda wanted to marry Gene. Sometimes Gene wanted to marry Linda. Gregory married Lois. Ben married Nancy. Doug married Sue. Linda and Gene took a flat with Paul. Gene married Marion and moved to Montreal.

Bereft, Linda sailed to London on the "France." At the University she met Ahmet.

Jerry had an affair with Lois. Gregory was almost killed in

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a motorcycle accident. Jerry went to Europe. When he returned, a year later, to New York, he subleased Paul's apartment. Paul went away and wrote a novel. He returned and collaborated on a second novel with Jerry. They went to London.

Linda wanted to marry Paul. She had an affair with Jerry. The three of them lived together in Ahmet's flat. After an unhappy and brief affair with Bob, Paul went away and wrote about it. Jerry moved out of the flat and had a brief and unhappy affair with Nancy.

Doug and Sue went to London. She hated London and returned to the States. Doug had an affair with Linda. Jerry had an affair with a different, younger Linda. Mr. Nolde had an affair with the first Linda. Linda was very unhappy. She wanted to marry Jerry. She wanted to marry Doug.

Paul returned to the States. He decided to sublease the Williams's house with Sue. Doug grew worried and returned to the States. Ben was very upset. He refused to give Linda Doug's phone number.

Gene and Marion went to London.

Poets: Gregory. Gene. Doug.
Paul. Jerry. Bob.

Novelists,
short story writers: Gene. Doug. Paul. Jerry.
Lois. Nancy. Ben. Linda.
Sue. The Williams.

Painters: Marion. Linda. Sue.

Editors, anthologists: Doug. Jerry. Bob.
Ben. Mr. Williams.

Architect: Ahmet.

Art collector: Mr. Nolde.

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III

The artist, when he makes his art, shares a common fate with Rousseauistic man: he begins free and ends in chains.

And other metaphors (for instance, the furnishing of a room) to express the fact that at this point I know pretty well the nature of everything that must follow to the end of "Reredos" (which was the title it preserved through the entire first draft).

Both Jim and Jane are doubtful about the merits of this story. They seemed to enjoy the preceeding sections at the première in Jane's studio (she had just finished a handsome gray nude; we were all feeling mellow), but they questioned whether that wider audience who will read my story to themselves, who have never met me and, likely, never will, would find it relevant or interesting.

What a wider audience ought to know (bear in mind, reader, that this is the frame, not the story):

Four years ago, when I was in advertising, I wrote a story called "The Baron, Danielle, and Paul," which portrayed, behind several thick veils of circumspection, my situation during the previous year, when I had been living with John and Pamela on Riverside Drive. That story appeared, revised, as "Slaves" in the *Transatlantic Review*. Before it had come out, I was living with Pamela again, this time in London and with a different John, a recombination that Jim (before he had ever met Pamela) used as the basis of an amusing piece of frou-frou called "Front and Centaur." After he had met her he wrote "Récits," which is a kind of love story and in no way frivolous. (It, too, was taken by the *Transatlantic Review*.) Then Jim came here, to Milford, and almost immediately Jane wrote a story about the three of *us*: "Naje, Ijm, and Mot." Two days ago Jim sent this off, immaculately typed, to McCrindle, who edits TR.

In these successive stories there is a closer and closer approximation to the "real" situation. Thence: this. (Which will almost necessarily go to McCrindle too. If he rejects it? *New Worlds*? Jim is co-editor there.)

A bedroom farce with all the doors opening onto the same

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library. Stage center, a row of typewriters. On the walls, posters advertising the *Transatlantic Review*.

But beyond the fleeting amusement of our prototypical incests, the story does (should) raise a serious question. Concerning? Art's relationship to other purposes, let us say. Or alternatively, the Artist's role in Society.

Why do I write stories? Why do you read them?

* *

The Semaphore

The maples, whose leaves he would so much have preferred to rake, grew far up the hill, beyond even the most reckless gerrymandering of the boundaries of the backyard. The leaves that he was in fact raking were dingy brown scraps, mere litter, the droppings of poplars.

Jane came out onto the porch. She had just made herself blonde. "You shouldn't do it that way," she said.

"How *should* I do it?" he said.

"You should rake them into piles, and then put the piles in boxes, and then empty the boxes into the incinerator, and then incinerate them."

"Do *you* want to rake the leaves?"

"I hate to rake leaves—it reminds me of poems in *The New Yorker*. I wanted you to come in the kitchen and look at what Dylan's found."

Dylan had found a slug.

"It's a snail," she said, "without its shell."

"It's a slug," he said.

"Oh, you're always so disagreeable."

"Snail!" Dylan crowed proudly. "Snail!"

"No, not a snail," he explained, in the slow expository tone he reserved for his son. "A slug. Say 'slug.' "

Dylan looked at his father with bewilderment.

"Slug," he coaxed. "Slug. Slug."

"Fuck," Dylan said.

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Jane laughed. (The night before Jim had tried to explain to Dylan the difference between a nail and a screw. Dylan could not pronounce the word 'screw,' so Jim had taught him to say 'fuck' instead.)

"No, slug." But wholly without conviction.

"Snail?"

"Okay, it's a snail."

Jane found a grape jelly bottle and punctured the top with a nail. (Nails don't have threads; screws do.) She put the shell-less snail in the bottle and gave the bottle to Dylan. The snail's extended cornua explored its meaningless and tragic new world.

"Do you want to give your snail a name?" Jim asked. "What do you want to call him?"

After a moment's deliberation Dylan said, "Four eight."

Neither Jim nor Jane thought this a very satisfactory name. At last Jane suggested 'Fluff.'

Even Dylan was happy with this.

Jim went outside to finish raking the brown leaves, while Jane went up to her studio to work. Her new painting represented a single gray body that embraced its thick torso with confused arms. The three heads (which might have been the same head seen from three different angles) bore a problematical relationship to the single torso. It was based on one of Blake's illustrations to the *Inferno*.

Dylan stayed in the kitchen. He uncapped the grape jelly bottle and filled it with water. Snails live in water. The aquarium in the dining room was full of snails and guppies.

Fluff floated in the middle of the water, curled into a tight ball. Dylan, as he watched the snail drown, pronounced its name, its name, pronounced it.

* *

From the letter he wrote to his wife shortly before he came to Milford:

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Pardon the typing. My arms are a bit sore from yesterday's struggle with the harmonium, and I'm a little groggy, still, from being up late last night writing the first of this letter (which, looking back to, I feel should be torn up and disposed of). And I'm all emotional and everything. (I cried when I got your letter, and the effects have not yet worn off. I miss you so much. I love you so much. I want to be with Dylan so badly. You really have no idea what importance you two are in my life, how central you are to everything I do. Just after the death of his wife, Chandler wrote to a friend something like, "Everything I did, for twenty years, every moment, was just a fire for her to warm her hands by." Which is rather how I feel. You'd do best, by the way, to disregard Tom's proclamations on the subject of earthly love. Tom's ideas of love, as you must *surely* know, are rather peculiar ones. Never listen to a renegade Catholic's opinions on love; only listen to what his work tells you. I *do* love you. I love you very much, and I love you more, this moment, this month, this year, than ever I have before. I do, Jane. There's desperation in it, yes—I need that love, to hold up against the world—I need it to give all the rest of what I do some small meaning, a degree, a single degree, of relevance—I need it as defense, and as reason. But that doesn't make the love any less real. With Creeley, I'm afraid I finally believe that 'It's only in the relationships men manage, that they exist at all.' You ask me to write of love. But how can one write of love, particularly our love?—it is absolute, and words are approximations. I have done the best I can do, here, in this letter. I have tried, in the poems, to do better. But I do not, finally, believe in the power of words to do other than distort, fictionalize, and obfuscate. I love you. Which is the simplest and best way, because every word there, and there are few of them, is an absolute concept. I love you.)

* *

A Lasting Happiness

"How strange life is," Jim remarked, after a pause during which he had taken in the stark details of my cramped cell. "Who would have thought, only a few years ago, that you... that I..."

"Those years have been kind to you, Jim," I insisted earnestly. "Your books have enjoyed both popular and critical success. Though you cannot be said to be rich, your life has been filled with pleasures that wealth could never buy. The

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youth of the nation acclaim you and have no other wish than to pattern their lives on yours. And you, Jane Rose, you are lovelier now than when first we met. Do you remember?—it was July, in Milford."

She turned aside a face that might have come from the pencil of Greuze, but I had seen that tear, and—dare I confess it?—that tear was dearer to me than her smile!

"And you, Tom?" Jim asked in a low voice.

"Oh, don't think of me! I've been happy, too, in my own small way. Perhaps life did not bring altogether everything that I once expected, but it has given me... your friendship."

He broke into tears and threw his arms about me in a last heartrending embrace. "Tom!" he cried in agony. "Oh, Tom!"

I smiled, removing his hand gently from my shoulder to place it in Jane's. "You'll soon have all of us in tears," I chided, "and that *would* be silly. Because I expect to be *very* happy, you know, where I am going."

"Dear, dear Tom," Jane said. "We will always remember you."

"Ah, we ought never to trust that word 'always.' I would be quite satisfied with 'sometimes.' And young Dylan, how is he?"

"He is married, you know. We have a grandchild, a darling little girl."

"How wonderful! How dearly I should like to be able to—But, hush! Can you hear them in the corridor? It's time you left. It was so good of you to come. I feel quite...transfigured."

Jane rose on tiptoe to kiss my cheek. "God bless you!" she whispered in my ear.

Jim pressed my hand silently. There were no words to express what we felt at that moment.

They left without a backward glance.

The warden entered to inquire if I wished to see a priest. I refused as politely as possible. My hands were bound, and I was led along the corridor—the guards seemed much more reluctant than I—and out through the gate to the little pony cart.

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The ride to the place of execution seemed all too brief. With what passionate admiration my eyes drank in the tender blueness of the sky! How eagerly I scanned the faces fleeting past on both sides! How familiar each one seemed! And the grandeur of the public buildings! The thrilling flight of a sparrow across the panorama of roofs! The whole vast spectacle of life —how dear it suddenly had become!

A sturdy young man—he might, I reflected, almost have been myself in another incarnation!—assisted me up the steps and asked if there was anything that I would like to say.

"Only this," I replied— "It is a far, far better thing that I do than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known."

He nodded resignedly. "Mm-hm."

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Kenneth Koch

Faces

The face of the gypsy watching the bird gun firing into the colony of seals; but it was filled with blanks;
The face of the old knoll watching his hills grow up before him;
The face of the New England fruit juice proprietor watching his whole supplies being overturned by a herd of wild bulls;
The face of a lemur watching the other primates become more developed;
The face of gold, as the entire world goes on the silver standard, but gold remains extremely valuable and is the basis for international exchange;
The face of the sky, as the air becomes increasingly filled with smoke and planes;
The face of the young girl painted as Saint Urbana by Perugino, whose large silver eyes are focused on the green pomegranate held by a baby (it is Jesus) in the same painting;
The face of the sea after there has been a storm, and the face of the valley
When the clouds have blown away and it is going to be a pleasant day and the pencils come out for their picnic;
The face of the clouds;
The faces of the targets when all the arrows are sticking out of them, like tongues;
The face of insects; the tiny black mustachioed ineptitude of a fly;
The face of the splinters on the orange crate;
The face of the Depression, which shook up America's faith in her economy so badly;
The face of President Hoover during this event;
The face of Popeye; the face of Agamemnon; the face of Ruth in the Bible; the face of Georges Simenon;

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The face of the hornet; the face of the carnation; of the orchid; the face of the roots of the elm tree;
The face of the fruit juice stand proprietor in Hawaii—it is black and lined
With the years and the climate; the face of God in Pinturicchio; the 1920's face of Gala Eluard;
And the face of Paul Eluard; the face of the birthday party as envisioned by Pablo Picasso; the map of Ireland
In Barbara's face; the map of Egypt on the wall
Of the Alexander-of-Macedon-looking hotel proprietor's face; the eye's face; the face of the ear; faces of all the noses;
The face of the snowman; the face of Rome
In being Mistress of Europe (if she was) in the fifteenth century;
The nude in her environment with sketched-in face
Or suggested face; the magic face of the chestnut tree
Blowing in the wind and scattering its teeth; the face of the bachelor's button; the face of the east
When, just mounted, Aurora sends forth her streaks
Of amorous potency and blue; and the face of the roost
From which everyone has flown away;
The face of the rushing gopher; the face of the wall
Of the hot, cracking, white clay house in Greece
When the stone hits it; the Russian faucet's face; the face of your loved one as depicted on the form
By a "police artist"—she is wanted for entering and breaking
The psalmodizing face of the daybreak sea-green palace to kidnap the face
Of Egypt, Cleopatra's face, carved by a sculptor
With a face like evening's face—blue, quiet, and stirred by a breeze; the face of Paris; the beautiful face of the bean
When it has been smashed; the face of the banana
In its bunch, being thrown into the boat, and while sailing through the air
Thinking, "Someone is going to eat me! but, first, a long, solemn journey..." A diamond face; the wheel's face
When it has been going downhill for two hours and suddenly realizes it is no longer a part of its original wagon—it is now diffuse, or dead, or a "spare part," "used," or "free";

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The face of the architect who sees his first building crumbling
to pieces— he has forgotten to put in the beams!
With a sleepy face—awaking in the morning—"This is your
building!" Moods!
Great Britain's beautiful face during the storm;
William Blake's face; Homer's face; Jack and Jill's faces; Brenda Starr's insinuating face;
The wind's face as pictured (actually, carved) on the Tower of
the Winds in Athens; the new year's face
When it learns it is our last one on earth; and the domed face
Of the cemetery plot in which we lie, finally absorbed and
pulled into the other faces;
The face of the burning mouse who lived in the chair
When it was manufactured in Sweden, in someone's dream;
and the gulf s face
When it is full of the Stream; and the egg-like face of the district manager of "La Lune."
Notice: the eye is a face. Notice: the wave is a fir tree. Notice:
impetuously: the nut's face drank from the gala's flutes
with precarious impunity.
Oh faces like wet summer moods! The face of the champion
on the mountain
When he is straining to pick up a stone; DNA's toothless face;
The face (I heard this in a story) of the old woman who had
not been down from the mountains since the nineteenth
century
When she was brought down to look at the city—how it astonished her, showing in her face
And in the movements of her frail body—she wavered back
and forth!
And the sea lion's giant face; the face of the first clouds,
All climbing and responsiveness; the great harvest of the
Meuse's face,
Protectiveness, giant, autumnal, and sunny, suggesting strong
limbs graced by perfect serene contentment;
The Greek face on the jar, so unlimited as to be speechless captions
Of armor and of sleeping love, the beginnings of face

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In the infant or really in the embryo deep in womb valley
Where there is nothing to focus on with face, and the faces of the happy and satisfied lovers,
One has blonde hair and is a woman, the other has brown hair and is a man,
They lie on the beach or the bed of contentment murmuring "Stone's face"
And "Burnt reed's face" and all the other faces to each other;
And the breathtaking beauty of the monument-
Al door which the hornets have left unharried, bus face rushing by, this sandless evening, oh visage, oh where is that face
Which would have opened these eyes, which, opened, might have shown us the truth? the dock's face
When the young boat hits it, it flies apart in merrymaking splinters, fond of the boat
And longing for the renewal of its touch; the comic face
Of the drum, when its calfskin is torn during the annual concert
To the royal house of Indonesia; and the cook's face
When he has poisoned the wine. I want to take all these faces
And make them mine. I want hypodermic
Impossibles, nude Bellini, Popeye inside concrete house, with volume
Of bagpipe music concentric, winter, Fra Angelico's face
And the faces he painted, his Virgin, his Musicians; and the face
Of the honey bee when it is wet and dripping
With flowery ooze; the face of the feverfew
Which was growing on the mountain until the shears sliced it; the face of the beach
Down which twenty people have been running; the face in the carpet; the face of the peach
When it was missed by the bullets; faces of a party of two
Who have been run over in the mountains;
The grapefruit's face, when the season has been hitting it with atmospheric drums;
And the beautiful breasts and eyes and face

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Of the woman who was shooting coils (electric ones) off the fence at Aleppo, where the shoes of Lord Byron
Were claimed to have been found by a woman with an iron face, she had a terrible operation
But her interest in Byron's biography has kept her alive; her doctor's face
When he realized the miracle he had performed; Gerard de Nerval's face, imagined by Soutine
On a summer morning; the club soda factory's face
And the face of its receptionist, yawning, "I am sorry, you cannot see Sir Abelard Face; he is dead. There are no more Faces in the world this morning. Goodbye. The Cavalcade too is closed."
I had so wanted to go with you to the Cavalcade! It was owned by Sir Abelard Face—
An amusement park ride that took you up into the mountains, as if in a blizzard.
"Goodbye." O seagreen faces! O endless rough loopabouts of northern and also southern seas!
And faces of larger sea units, royally blue; faces of the speakeasy
When its boiler room explodes; O scenic faces of the quiet old women of Peru!
Nose face! illegal face! rocket face! and the face of the glue
When it is taken to Fiesole and dropped, actually hurled, down toward Florence
But it doesn't get there and is picked up instead on a dark, dry route
By a hen with a clucking face, then dropped again
(Because impossible to use it as food) and on the label of this gluetube the lovely face
Of the Italian model, Angelizia, etched in pink and blue
Against a white cloudy background, she became the mistress
Of the owner of the glue factory, now her face lies battered
Upon the Tuscan road, but she is happy, the real Angelizia, as she ponders,
Dancing in Tucson, how many times her face is reproduced

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And seen around the world; jewelry's faces; faces of firemen;
the face of the bowling pin; the rhubarb's face
When it is growing with abandon; the remarkable face of the
street, with the people in it, each one speaking, there is
such a roar;
The hero of comedy's face, when everything is going well,
And the hippopotamus's face, when he finds he has been put
in the wrong zoo, there is no water,
And so he rages, damply, against the summer's bars;
And the chicken's face when the thief has not succeeded in
stealing him;
The leader of the orchestra's face when the music flies off as if by
magic (the wind is carrying it) and the beautiful valentine face
With gold hair—it is real, you can touch it—reminding me of
you;
Alfred Jarry's face on a winter afternoon, when *Ubu Cocu* has
just opened at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées
And his followers have mounted him on their shoulders, they
wind through the wintry streets with the characteristic
abandon
Of open-face sandwiches, and no one is troubled
Except the ocean, whose moon-abiding, satellite face
Speaks to the nuts just once, then speaks no more.
The face of the blue coca-cola when the Acropolis frieze of the
Panathenaea has been defaced by secret marbles
Blown from an overhanging hedgehog's pepsi-cola balloon;
December's face
When January is over and he again feels the cool form behind
him in the parade of months;
The faces of fleas and of firecrackers; the faces of stopwatches;
faces of stock markets, prices going up and down;
The face of the legs, when you are stepping proudly; and the
face of Alaska;
The faces of hammering fools, faces of elephants; faces of dis-
carded raincoats; bras' faces; aprons' faces; the branchings
of the yew;
The face of the Unknown Madonna, and the cork's face
At noon, the orange face, the cocoa's face,

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The face of the needle, which is chiefly an eye; and the face of
the guru and of the couturier;
The loom's face, when weavers' hands delay; the face of the
crow
When the sky light hits it; and faces with teeth,
Eyes, ears, nose, and cheekbone, faces for cold weather
And steaming faces for hot weather; the face of the owner of
the farm
When the camels have ripped it to pieces; the face on the fan,
I believe it is Herodiade; the stick's face
When it is lying in the garden, and the faces of fliers
When they find that they are floating toward the sun;
The faces of Oz, of China, of Brittany; the face of Chang Fu
and Brit the Chambermaid;
Faces of old Athens and Sparta, faces of Argos, the unserious
face of Gus the Goose;
Faces of the sunbathers when the clouds split into eighteen
hundred shapes; the amazed face of the mule;
The faces of ants, as they run all around; the face of Lucas van
Leyde; the face of Hindemith; the face of Childe Harold;
The face of the ox pulling his cart;
The face of Sindbad the Sailor; of Pontius Pilate; of Jesus; of
Nestor;
The faces of Sappho, of Lord Elgin, of Bix Beiderbecke, of
Saint Valentine, of Daphnis and Chloe, of Hero and Lean-
der;
The face of Hamilcar; the face of Sally Mara; of Sir Thomas
More; of Miss Fujiyama; and of the Duchess of Falling Out
Of Bed; the face of the earth before it is bitten by the blue
Of morning; and its daily face afterward;
The faces of fifteen Romantics; the faces of stones;
The face of Haussmann, rebuilding Paris in the eighteen fifties;
the face of Dmitri Mitropoulos; the face of Mr. Bones;
Raymond Queneau's face;
Marcel Raymond's face; the face of the paper on which the
face is drawn of the Queen of Sheba
By an artist with a bearded face—last night he had drunk a
good deal

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But today he is happy, to be creating; and the face of the paper after the drawing is on it
Almost entirely concealing its original face; and the face of Modern Art
Which is fascinated by this problem; the face of Calvin Coolidge
And of Gertrude Stein; the underwater tow which brings all these faces together
And makes them mine, then distends them and scatters them; the frilly blue lace face of Uncle Ho
And the Winged Victory's face, where it lies, so far lost beyond all salvation;
And the face of the grass; Alaska's snowy face; the billboard face advertising a certain kind of cheese
In Italy; and the fat industrialist's face as he slowly gains recognition
That the heyday of his class is ended; the museum director's face
Who thinks his has come before it has; face of Abelard; and face of Peire Vidal; face of the orchid
And of the oyster; the faces of Venice, when everyone is wearing a mask—
Some faces! the End; or rather the Beginning; or really the End. Faces taking a fall,
Faces to be discriminated, faces in bathtubs, gorgeous, risky faces totaling into the billions,
Unimaginable faces shaped like a hat or a football; clowns' faces; the face of Saint Ursula
When she was playing a banjo; the face of Einstein; the face of the East; the face of grain; the face on the weathervane;
The face of Liberal London; the Seine's rusty face; the visitor from Mexico, mangled by disease;
Bentham's face; and the face of the secret
Which no one can tell, which is continually bursting from these faces—
Noah's face, Kusawara's face, Poussin face, Tiepolo face, frog faces, browed faces, angular face, peppy face; the faces of seaweed; the faces of seeds.

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Ron Padgett

Big Bluejay Composition

Compositions in harmony

the sunlight rods over the Commuter's Spa

bluejay

oh

I don't want to go in and watch Gene Tierney on tv moonlight

when the shadow of a doubt

tiptoes down the hall

crumpled tossed in wastebasket

Rainbow Colored Pencils made by Eberhard Faber maker of Mongols

ie Children of Paradise

gray line wiggle

a large permanent flinch

just under the skin then

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She turned to me in the flying starlight

in the in the

tiny as a (there are no straight lines in a curve) breeze

breeze curving

moonlight

when the m-moon shines
over the cow's shit

bzzzzzzzzzz

bzzzz

the square of the sum
of two .flashing. numbers from the now on bzzz

suddenly the onions replaced the onusphere

—to leon the counterpoint— and Tommie Vardeman
stuck his

head out the door a very old auto racer

gray wearing glasses

bluejay

sweet as stops

I catch my breath I cry (cont. p. 42)

of planetary music

heard in trance

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well the figurine of the bluejay

½ in the dimensional side of God

the earth is still——

...stars...stars...

God is in a trance, now's the time to compose a few immortal lines

re's the immortal paper?

e immortal brain? star

we go trot

trot-trot

past the abattoir

sliding 1968 sliding

under the beauty of

broken thunder

he goes over center

k-boom softness is northern

alert

alarming

the north,

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le même nord où la mission Albert agonise maintenant parmi
les cristaux

that is the wild blue yonder

screwed onto a bolt from the blue

magnetic,

the pursuit of Hedonism emerges boink from unwrinkled
clouds

while... trumpets... Haloed, long pause

from across the ocean long pause

came gunshot

a piece of rain fell and hit the horizon

Slowly I turned...

behind us loomed the awesome figure of the gigantic baked enamel ape, which Professor Morrison had, with fanatical patience, constructed over the years.

A bluejay

Tennessee raised in the dark

to the highest power

Tennessee is the n it made

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I have spoken

— — — —

I am speaking

like a sunset going down

behind

the rising dawn

to *d* ot mother,

Remember me in your semi-conscious prayers hit the brakes

when the dew is glistening on the bluejay

and I go walkie to nightmare school

and the refinery is blasting away

Process and Reality on this damp, foolish evening

bl here

the future
casts a pall bearer on the present—in the future the present will be

a thing of the past losing altitude

You shake

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No

your head No

the smell of coffee on a morning the smell of hot coffee on a

winter's morning

the table is set in the breakfast room frost on the windows sunlight

lock into which Mr. Morrison is inserting his key
floods the hardware store ∧ the black and white cereal box the porcelain

the fresh peaches the milk +

Now our mighty battleships will steam the bounding main

people jetting along

a symphony of tweets

the light of the Eternal Flame
clearly visible

from where you sit

in those great, golden heights no doggie
in the neighborhood

all the doggies have gone off to war to be male nurses

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the moonlight on the earthquake

into which many doggies fell

plunged fiery and screaming

in their machines

. . .

gravely the Statue of Liberty

turned and faced the nation, finally!

a medium-sized flesh-colored male sexual organ extending

from its inner ear,

"The period in history termed Modern is now over" it said

–CLICK–

the bluejay fluttered on its shoulder

"Y-you'd b-b-better b-b-believe it!" it cried wildly

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The Road to Madras

Philip Metcalfe

It is morning, about ten o'clock. An hour ago I slipped and fell against the dull rim of the bathtub and broke what must be my right clavical. Afterwards, I lay on my back making a prolonged humming sound because the fractured bone was causing me so much pain. By now it has lessened to a throbbing ache and I have become quiet.

The bathtub is one of the old kind, white, very deep and raised on legs which look like slightly cupped hands. Under it stray wisps of dust tremble slightly like ocean grass but never blow out onto the clean, dry floor where I lie. I never realized before how well defined the domains are in bathrooms. I've also noticed that the paint under the washbowl is hanging in jagged chips which never seem to come loose and fall on the floor. Evidently that is as far as the decaying process goes for washbowls. The paint becomes disturbed, cracks, turns down and there it hangs for an eternity or until an earthquake perhaps. At least my little fall has not shaken it any.

The throbbing in my right shoulder makes me feel extremely delicate, I lie perfectly still. It would be nice to painfully stand up, support my right arm with my left and walk mincingly into the hall, down the stairs to the phone in the kitchen and call a doctor. But I think I shall have to continue lying here for some time. Four weeks ago my car went off the road and I broke my left forearm and shoulder. A cast extends half way down my chest and out to the tip of my left wrist so that my left arm juts out like a white turnstile with a bend in the middle for my elbow. I am immobile. The most I can do is to raise my knees a little like a woman in love.

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The bathroom window is open. It is always open. With the great expanse of country outside flies rarely venture into the house. Just beyond the window is the top of a green tree, an aspen, and beyond that blue morning sky. The breeze turns and waves the leaves, making the tree a shivering green image. It is chilly lying on the floor. Although the sun has been up for three hours the bathroom is on the north side of the house and is always cool. Beyond the window, where I can no longer go, a purple shadow stretches along the ground with a roof on it.

I have a natural bump, I have noticed, on the back of my head where my backbone meets my skull. Lying now on my back I can feel the weight of my head resting on this spot. I turn my head slightly. The fracture hurts again for a moment. I hold my breath and the pain returns to a throb which measures my pulse.

I did not expect this to happen, certainly not today. I was completely innocent of any knowledge, even a little optimistic when I got up this morning. Now the optimism has seeped away, as if I had been cut somehow during my fall and it has drained out of me.

Today I was to meet my wife whom I have not seen for six months. She is driving all the way from southern Oregon to meet me in Portland. I was to catch a plane from the little airport here in Madras at eleven thirty. At twelve thirty I would be in Portland. But I won't see her now. She will wait through the afternoon, telephone the airport for the next plane from Madras. There is only one other. Perhaps she will even drive out to the airport to meet it. But there will be no one there. Hurt, she will call here but there will be no one to answer the phone and that will be how it ends.

And the worst is that I am still in my pajamas. There is no way for me to prove that I really intended to meet her. Perhaps she will never believe that I was trying to reach her when I slipped and fell awkwardly with my bent white arm.

She is on the road now. She would have had to start around eight this morning to reach Portland in time. I had been asleep then. I feel guilty about that now. I wish I had been awake.

I can picture her driving. She is a good driver, had learned

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just before we were married, I'm not sure why. She always disliked driving and I could have taken her where she needed to go.

She must take the road out to the coast. Few cars drive it, mostly logging trucks. I think of her being nervous, probably smoking frequently because she is alone. There is no radio in the car. She won't have had much breakfast, perhaps a piece of toast and a candy bar. I don't suppose where she lives now there is much food at all. She often felt weak when we lived together because she ate so infrequently. It became part of her nature, her extreme sensitivity like her sweaters which smell faintly of smoke and a kind of sweet perfume she uses. With regret I realize that I have never bought her perfume, nothing really. I try to remember what, books and a few records because they have always been of interest to her, records, people who sing on them. Never any flowers except some I picked once, from a garden of a house we stayed in for a weekend. I wish now that I had given her more things. She would probably laugh at that but I have a feeling she missed them, that they must have meant something to her. But there must be other reasons for our estrangement. Surely, as she would say, if you really loved me, presents, their absence, would have made little difference.

The highway through that region is very new and three lanes in most places. I remember it for the freshness of the white dividing lines. It seems to me that it is always raining on that stretch of road. The higher reaches of the mountains are closed off by moist clouds but the rain is very clear and it is possible to see long stretches of the highway winding in and out of the ranged, fir-sloped interior. A few solitary fir trees distinguish themselves because they come close to the road, leaning slightly. Their tips, like foreshortened whips, end in a supple curve.

The river's din accompanies the progress of the highway but since it is raining she will have the windows up and the sound will not intrude into the car.

Occasionally a few rocks can be seen on the road. I have always wondered when those rocks fell. In the night perhaps. They are there in certain places, separate, distinguished, almost

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intentionally placed. But there must be cases when they have rolled and skipped down a mountainside and hit cars. Senseless to worry that her car will be hit by rocks. But if one went through the window then she would be hurt. I can picture her driving carefully off the road, getting out, bleeding. But we have driven it several times together and there were only a few rocks, close to the side of the road. But I keep seeing her standing beside the car delivered up to the rushing din of the river.

The air coming in the window reminds me more and more of falling water, spilling onto the floor, traveling in irregular, disconcerting waves over my body. I've already grown used to lying on the floor. My neck has relaxed, I will probably be straighter for it. But I am a little worried about my plaster arm. Connected securely to where I suppose my left shoulder is, the arm juts up into the air. A hand shows itself at the end. It has been up in the air for almost two hours now, pale and cold. It looks strangled, the rough end of the cast choking it off at the wrist. I am sure it is bad to have a limb raised high above the level of the heart for any length of time. But there is nothing I can do. It is impossible to turn to either side.

I broke everything in the cast four weeks ago when my car turned over as I was going to Madras. I didn't write her of this until a week later when everything had been set and I had been out of the hospital for a few days. I knew that if I told her right away she would be worried and drive up to take care of me. It was exasperating to have something like that happen, exasperating to think that it might affect whether we would live together or not. So I had mentioned it only in passing in a letter and I didn't say that the shoulder was broken. She called me the next evening. I hadn't heard her voice in six months. I told her that I had adjusted to it and could maneuver quite well. The weather was nice and a neighbor, Jean, came by with groceries, once with a hot casserole.

I tried to picture while she talked what her life was like. I was vaguely familiar with the countryside, green firs, not a lot of rain in the winter. In her letters she spoke of pheasants that walk around the lawn in the early morning. But in general her letters tell me very little although some are quite long.

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Some things about her friends, herself, what she had done that day, read, gone out.

She must have over a thousand letters of mine. She is the only person with whom anyone could claim I ever "corresponded." When we lived together I saw that she kept them in a suit box tied with green cord. I once wanted to read them but she wouldn't let me. I'm sure she never went through them herself. They are gestures of love and are therefore saved, which is another gesture of love. I didn't understand this until late. Had I thought about it that way I would have saved her letters. But I dislike saving things, especially things written on paper. But since she left me and I could never be sure that she would come back I began to save her letters, thinking that each might be her last. In each successive one she seems to be vanishing a bit more, disassociating herself. I knew she was working on this, that it is probably the reason she writes.

She called three more times that week. I began spending the afternoons constructing our evening conversations, something I had not done for a long time. She has never seen this house or this dry, sandy country; range land but very high so that the air is dry and close to the sun. I would imagine myself taking long walks with her. The driveway comes off the main road to Madras full of holes but straight as a die. It bends once to pick up my house and then it continues across the meadow, through some cattle gates into the wooded hills rising about three miles behind the house where the road becomes a fire trail. We would walk along this road, I decided. There is a hill beside the house with a lone tree on it, the only tree for over a mile. All the rest have been killed by porcupines stripping off the bark. Some afternoons, I would explain to her, I come out and there are porcupines in it. It is a long walk up the hill, longer than it looks from below, especially for a man who can't swing one arm. If I'm only going a little ways along the road I bring the pistol with me but I dislike having a gun with me if I'm out for a long walk. If I think I see a porcupine in the tree as I walk along the road I fire a few shots in that direction. Sometimes twigs fly away from its green shape. The porcupines slide raggedly down the trunk and disappear on the

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ground. I would hate to kill a porcupine I think. Basically I like them but there must be a streak of meanness in them to make four or five a month walk three miles over the range to climb into that tree. I never climb up the hill with the revolver, the porcupines do that. Instead, I frighten them from a distance and those days when I am going on a longer walk and must leave the pistol at home I try not to look at the tree. I don't want to see several gray shapes perched in it. There is no way I could justify to myself making a special trip all the way back to the house for a pistol.

The broken arm did interfere with us. It probably reminded her again of my helplessness as she liked to call it which is really, at least in my own mind, a vulnerability. But despite the vulnerability I had always thought of myself as lucky until the accident. I have always believed in the existence of luck. When I was very young I investigated it on my own, silently, and by the time I was twelve I had decided that my luck was fairly good. And meeting her was a piece of good luck. I wouldn't have met her. It was completely accidental. It bothered her that we never seemed fated to meet. We got along well, yet if we had not been in love I am sure that we would not have stayed together for the five years before our marriage. We were married insignificantly one winter day. It was I who decided. Restlessness can kill love and I knew that it bothered her that I did not make this final gesture. Gestures are immensely important. I made it but the restlessness remained for her although it was clear that she loved me very much.

The last time she called she asked me to meet her in Portland at the end of the week. Perhaps things were not working out for her, I thought. I was worried that after all the pain it took for her to leave me she had not been able to find anything else. I said I would meet her and then she asked me about my arm.

"The cast is getting dirty."

"Didn't the doctor say that you could wash it with a little soapy water?"

"Yes, but when it gets wet the cast smells unpleasantly." I heard her laugh at my sensitivity.

"Has Jean been over?" she asked. For a moment I thought

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she was speaking of one of her friends. But that was all she knew her by, just the name which carried such a weight of familiarity. And the next day it happened again. Jean came by in the morning to drop off some groceries. I told her I was leaving for Portland in two days and that I would call when I got back since I didn't know how long I would be away. I always offer her coffee but she never has time. She runs a small ranch with a brother who also runs a gas station. As she turned to get back in the truck she said: "I'm sure everything will turn out all right." She slammed the door, waved and sped down the length of road. At the end of the driveway the sound of the motor changed, lessened as the car came to a halt. Then it started up again as she turned left on the highway to Madras. I remained standing beside the house nolding the groceries in my good arm. They sounded so much alike, this neighbor and my wife, as if they were talking to each other about some featureless person and I no longer moved and breathed. I was frightened. I remembered that those telephone conversations with her had all been so lonely. We were together only during those imaginary afternoons we spent walking along the road.

I wonder what time it is. Someday I must try strapping a wrist watch to my cast, or plaster on an alarm clock. The sun is high and little of it enters the room except for a vague brightness. I have been listening to an irregular murmuring sound for some time. I think it must be the water in the john lapping the sides of the bowl. A bar of sunlight, the only sunlight in the room now, touches the john bowl and the moving water reflects the light onto the ceiling in a liquid shimmer which threatens to dissolve the plaster. The aspen beyond the window is silent, leaden, pinned to the sky. From somewhere I can hear a cicada like the sound of an abandoned swing still in motion. But the nearest children are seven miles down the road and there are not many swings in this country.

Eleven, eleven thirty, quarter to twelve. She is on the coast road now. It is no longer raining. The rain stays inland, caught by the mountains. A very barren coast, steep mountains ending in the sea, sometimes an occasional top rising out of the water offshore. Sunlight, the long strips of breakers moving

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toward the lonely beaches. The road winds along high above. It would be nice to leave the road and glide weightless across the barren heights, the long heather-covered stretches and the wastes of sand. How cruel it is not to be able to move unimpeded toward something so deeply familiar. If for a moment she sought to drive for some isolated beach the car would topple over the side and fill the air with the ugly sound of breaking metal.

It is hot. I'm beginning to perspire. The breeze has gone. Nothing comes in the window anymore. Outside the sun has passed its zenith and its rays fall upon the shimmering ground like thrown seed. The bathroom is filled with shadow, a warm, heavy shadow of heat. The two faucets with their knobs are frozen, a towel hangs motionless over the bar of the towel rack. The water in the john is still. My razor and shaving brush are on the side of the washbowl. A toothbrush hangs from the rim of a little wall fixture. The other places for toothbrushes are empty. The mirror reflects the opposite wall. The house is quiet.

I wonder if there are any porcupines in the tree on the hill. It is about this time of day that I usually take my walk. But today they will sleep in the tree undisturbed. I would have been away anyway. On the plane to Portland.

I hadn't planned on calling a taxi. There is one taxi company in Madras but to see one of their cars bumping along the driveway with its checkered pattern on the doors and the name of the company on it, with the dust breaking out behind, would have nauseated me. A complete disharmony, I decided. But, she would ask, such a little thing like that, if you really loved me it wouldn't have stopped you. In a way she is serious. She does not believe it as true but rather as an expression of longing for things to be that simple. I have some friends who vacation in Madras during the summer. I thought I could easily call them. They are always at home. In an hour I would be in Portland trying to gauge the temperature through the plane window although it is summer and would be warm but it is interesting to estimate how one would feel, how hot the sun was and whether there was a breeze blowing out there. The Portland airport is very new. In the afternoon it is usually crowded and the cigarette smoke hangs gray along the con-

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courses. I would take a taxi from the airport to the apartment, but then Portland is a city, green, with clean streets and it would be all right.

I have always found it terribly painful that no matter how close two people are emotionally, a distance just beyond that of sight separates them completely. If she knew I was not on the plane to meet her in Portland the long drive could have been spared her. If she only knew that I am still here in a house in western Oregon, nine miles outside of a little town called Madras. I keep seeing her driving, the wide flat countryside of the Willamette valley going by, her delicate hands on the steering wheel. She lights a cigarette and in a manner so slightly awkward that it becomes perfect grace, she drops the dead match out of the window. Every action she has been performing for the last six hours, a breakfast not eaten, the miles of highway negotiated, her thoughts of the past weeks are a long combination reaching out to me. And in my mind the road, the highway is displaced and the miles northward are bent toward the east and the countryside becomes the flat, dry land of this country and she is on the road to this house. The distance between us gets smaller and smaller. Soon she will be here.

But she has stopped. I know that. She is in Portland. I have not come. She is waiting. She does not know where I am. She is waiting. I have betrayed my trust. I have ignored her long hours of driving to reach me, the days of solitude of the past six months. And now there is nothing to be done and I feel the hope die in her just as the feeling has almost gone from my left arm high above my heart.

To come to this house was useless. I thought it would help. I bought it soon after she left me. But she never saw it. I might just as well have never lived here. My feeling for it was an illusion for all the feeling she should have received. It is, finally, a stranger and I am a stranger to this country where I have uselessly spent the last six months of my life. I wish the walls would fall away and that I would rise high in the air above the little house with the hill beside it and the lone tree which I have spent six months trying to save. But the tree should never have expected to be saved.

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Ted Berrigan

Air Conditioning

It's very interesting
Weighing 500 lbs
You might even say, "it's great!"
"Let's drink to that!"
I did Dixie Cup Fanta Orange
IOWA BACK DEATH CHESTERFIELD
King & now a humming
Opening it "up" inside
Making a fire engine red
Desk chair bright green
White night & amazing you!
You don't believe it.

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Anti-war Poem

It's New Year's Eve, of 1968, & a time
for Resolution.

I don't like Engelbert Humpeldink.

I love The Incredible String Band.

The War goes on
& war is Shit.

I'll sing you a December song.

It's 5 below zero in Iowa City tonight.

This year I found a warm room
That I could go to
be alone in
& never have to fight.

I didn't live in it.

I thought a lot about dying

but I said *Fuck it.*

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Poem

of morning, Iowa City, blue-
gray & green, out the window
A mountain, blotchy pink & white
is rising, breathing, smoke

Now, lumbering, an elephant, on
crutches, is sailing, down
Capitol, down Court, crossing
Madison & down College, cold
clear air
pouring in

Now those crutches
are being tossed aside, the
elephant is beginning to rise
into the warm regulated air
of another altitude

That air is you, your breathing

Thanks for it, & thanks a lot
for Pasternak: The Poems of Yurii Zhivago
& Mayakovsky: Poems.
They were great.

Now it's me.

Ted Berrigan

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Spring

It is here but the colors
have stayed away. Guests
to no one—they pout inside
dark buds. The sky white—
astonished. Rivers are flowing
in spite of the same fragrance.
And people, awake like deer,
browse for a bright sleeve
among tarnished barns.
There is no one coming out
in green yet—but skies
drop blue, and the sun
goes right on burning down.

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Larry Fagin

Smudge

You have a little smudge on your forehead, dear,
like a smashed raisin cookie.
I know no reason why I should love you
with my brutal brilliance...
But when you come through that door,
starved, self-righteous,
too solemn for the gaiety of love,
I find your forehead with my mouth
and blow a big raspberry.

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Self-pity (East River)

Somewhere a boat is leaking
I don't know where.
The sailors may be drowning
but I don't care.
You were away too long
or not long enough.
My clothes don't fit me anymore
but I can see Brooklyn from where I stand
and the building where my clothes were made.
I'd rather be naked in a leafy glade
except for my shoes playing volleyball
with cheerful pink and ample maids
but I'll never get out of this world alive.
That was Hank Williams—a bunch of molecules.
I hold my tongue, look across the moon and blink.
You never wrote so you didn't know
a little colored ball of wool was my heart.
12 flights up I light my cigarette
puff hard and scowl at the river.

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Lewis Warsh

Song

Our last night in Europe
You stayed in the hotel room
While I went out for a look
At what the prostitutes
Were doing in Amsterdam

A bus took me up to the gate
Down a footpath
It was remarkable
You were not beside me
It was a translation

In which all one's dreams
Have suddenly burst
In on the sleeper
But for enjoyment's sake
I slept I wanted to wake

Up bathed in the sweat
Of the girl who
Beckons from a doorway
Light her match
The threshold one's light matches

As one steps over it
To gather steam which trembles from a grate
And divide our last smoke
And after it's over
Take a walk along the quai

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Which is a symbol of a long afternoon walk
I think it would be better if we didn't talk
And now I do not have to look back
On that room
Which enters my thoughts

And my heart wakes up from a recent stroke
Of fortune for I am alive
A prostitute stood smoking at the door to a café
She beckoned I went over
I stubbed my match on her throat

She collapsed I went inside
Her body it took twelve strokes
Before I collapsed
That was the first
And luck was with me: I went outside again

A sailor his uniform torn
Approached a window
Where a girl it doesn't matter what race
Displayed her goods
Behind the glass

She was looking at the sailor
Whose girl was waiting at home
For the day her sailor
Boyfriend would return
With the clap

As if a changed person had suddenly re-entered her life
That has come loose at the seams
A dress with nothing beneath it
Unzipped and hoisted over her head
So that her legs stick out

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And the springs of the bed are bouncing
In the morning light
Which is steering a course against the window panes
Of her father's ranch house
Where they are living together in bliss

But that night so far off I could
Only translate it from knowledge
Of my own past
Struggled against the prospects of the moment
In the sailor's life

When the girl behind the window beckoned him inside
Actually she took the cross from around her neck
And bending lifted her dress
To the cross on her lips
As if she were going inside herself to be fucked

But I did not want to have intercourse with just anyone
In fact I only wanted to see what was going on
I thought of you it was our last night
Away from home
I did not do anything but walk the streets

Getting lost in my own thoughts
And soon I got lost I had taken
The wrong street
It was a dead end with a cross street
Our hotel was at the end

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The Balustrade

Keith Cohen

This is a street that tries our credulity. A caterpillar truck has just overturned, arching its middle into the air. The neighbors appear. The driver wriggles out unhurt. The rain didn't stop. Frère Lubin flies down the adjacent street, gathering up his skirts several inches below the crotch. The debris is removed.

The tub occupies the far left-hand corner of the *salle de bain*. A shower attachment fits onto the main nozzle, and the shower head is suspended from a plastic hook on the wall by the circular formation at its head. When the door has been closed, a chair is revealed in the near left-hand corner and to its side on the wall three rows of towels hanging vertically. The seat of the chair is made of wicker, while its back consists of three parallel, slightly curved panels. The extreme right side of the room is taken up by a small sink and a large table next to it. Flat and round soaps lie at different points on the ledge at the back of the sink. The plug, attached by a chain just below this ledge, sits near some soap, a little off-center of the drain. At the end of the table nearest the sink, a short circular tin box stands apart from a jumbled assortment of combs, brushes, and stained pink plastic containers. Inside is a kind of mint candy known as pastilles. In the center of the room is a small white rug in the form of an oval.

A war memorial to the Canadian dead. The evanescent and pale petal nymphs, dead wives of the dead soldiers' uncles, would come each year, carrying in their cupped hands the water of the warm Artois. They danced slowly up the steps

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toward the central statue and stretched out their arms and bent their backs. The white light of the ground lights and the white light of the moon lit up their figures, which, like the statue, glowed in the night. They swarmed across the darkened fields and filled the white pavilion like comets entering a brighter galaxy. At the foot of the statue, they let the water drop, as if from their eyes. Once tired of their fête, the nymphs climbed up the statue and perched themselves all along its giant portions. As they came to rest, they instantly melted into the marble. None of the powerful spotlights had failed to work, none of them faltered.

Thesis is the point to be discussed or, in argument, maintained. It is usually stated in sentences at or near the outset. In logic, it can be an affirmation either to be proved or advanced without proof (a postulate). Otherwise, thesis is often considered a theme, composition, or essay. In such structures as these, thesis, in the sense of the point to be discussed, is conscientiously sought. When it is discovered, it is like a prize or a treasure. In other structures, thesis concerns the absence of thesis. Certain theses, thus, could be the union of two antithetical notions or the assemblage of purposefully bizarre propositions. In general, we come to regard thesis as an essential structure that disappears or denies a duality.

Thus we leave this subject at a most exciting stage of development, when discoveries of moment seem most imminent. The subject will not, as is often feared, flag with our withdrawal; rather, it will lie fallow for a time to rise once again and flourish. It is as though these soldiers guarded the subject, waving their flags one way and another, the colors red, white, and blue equally combined in each flag. Children stop to watch. Some ask what it's about. When they receive no answer, they pass along, seeming to forget. Straight red and yellow tulips wave in the air. A man honks his horn as he comes by in his car. Now the field is empty.

A face appears from behind a slightly opened door on the upper floor of the inner court. Each side of the building is of equal length. The dark court is reached by a large opening on

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the side bordering the street, past a high gate that is usually left open. To the left, on the ground floor, is the entrance to the upper chambers and to the office. At the far end of the court is another door. Shutters flank the entire length of most of the windows on the second story. Other smaller windows appear here and there along the otherwise uninterrupted inside wall. Ivy covers most of the wall area below the lower windows and stretches in some places up beyond the second panes.

After dinner, the boys would disperse. Some of them, unable, or simply disinclined, to wait any longer, flew up to their bedrooms. The majority, however, made for the streets with equally interesting projects in mind, to find a snack-bar to work behind and take over, to convert swan boats into submarines for the Seine, to have the hat-check girls join the floor show, to call forth all the domes, or to meet their favorite famous man, such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in his own street. Then they returned, some having succeeded, some having failed.

While performing the experiment, utmost care was taken that no vital data of the participants should be revealed to the proctors and that similarly no vital data of the plant formations should be revealed to the participants. Different sections of the photographs were examined by each of the participants in succession, who were then asked to check their particular reaction. Results were generated more or less as expected, except for one photographic section that showed the very base of a flower surrounded, where it entered the ground, by dead leaves. The experiment was repeated several times for verification, and always they concluded with the same astounding fact: that women see no stem in it.

Here is the call we had expected. Pedestrians, wandering slowly by the grand gates, stop now and then to look through. Now they suddenly turn their heads. What passes is not the peace that surpasses understanding, but a bread and pastry truck that seems about to lose its cargo. Tartes aux fraises, tartes aux mirabelles, tartes aux cerises, tartes aux abricots, mille-feuilles, éclairs. Deep in the garden mademoiselle refuses and monsieur

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insists. What passes between them is not the peace that surpasses understanding, but a figure like the dove that Gradgeon released from the castle tower early this morning and that Piero della Francesca painted in similar lines.

The grounds are proportioned in the French manner. To each side of the central walkway are rectangular plots, varying in individual area, but corresponding from one side to the other. At certain junctions of these plots, patios are located that depict a story or saying in mosaic or surround a small fountain. High hedges are the divisions between sections that are not naturally separated by a narrow pathway. Though in most respects only functional, these hedges are seen to form curves in two places where no other decoration exists. The curving hedges rise up and down and fill these land areas with intricately sculptured designs.

Night fell, and the castle spirits fled into the park. All day they had heard about the mischief carried on by a few of the wood spirits. They searched now through every bower and grove and at last came upon their comrades the wood spirits dancing merrily around a man and a woman who did not move. These two beings seemed frozen at the point of an action. The man, supporting himself with one foot against the stone bench where the woman sat, held one hand toward the woman's bared shoulder which he was an inch from touching. The woman, her hands folded in her lap, directed her head slightly away though her eyes were turned in the direction of the man. The wood spirits, who had seen their chance, transfixed the couple at this moment and waited for the time of day more suitable for the anticipated action. Now they were ready to unloosen their victims' muscles and proceed to watch the fascinating results. They danced furiously around the couple, intoning their magic songs to erase the enchantment. But the man and woman remained immobile. Only the woman's hair changed: it stopped waving in the night breeze. The wood spirits were bewildered and vexed, the castle spirits indignant. In a last fit of frenzy, the wood spirits, begging the castle spirits to join in, threw themselves against the fixed couple. As each spirit smacked against what was now cold

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marble, it vanished entirely. All that moved was the night breeze.

Out in the fields, Ted goes on with the weed clearance. He performs his duty with a sickle, an instrument consisting of a curved metal blade with a handle fitted onto a tang or some similar projecting shank. The blade, whose sharp edge is on the inner part of the curve, meets each weed at or near its base, depending on the arm-length Ted proportions from his elbows, and cuts cleanly through its width so that the weed falls to the ground. The curvature of this instrument, besides being convenient for the easily repeated motion it permits, is also dangerous, because its proximity to the worker with each circuit of cutting is apt to incur nicks to the lower leg. In such cases, Ted razes the weeds, and the sickle (weed-ax) pecks Ted.

C'est la photo parfaite. I'm keeping it hidden. It's of me and you: I'm beautiful and so are you. You don't know when it was taken—it's exquisite. I don't want you to see it now. But one day you can see it. It's of me and you, une vraie photo.

Inside the church is a replica in miniature of the outside. It appears above the gate-like formation that separates the nave from the transept and altar areas. The spires here include all the careful decoration, the lattice work, the buttressing, of the actual outer walls. The pinnacles are proportionately equidistant from the wall surface, and the ribs, transverse and diagonal, cut across each other to form the same angles. Behind these miniature stone carvings is the empty transept.

At the playground, the children are having a good time. Elyce asks herself one question: Is it right for her to interfere with the game and tell the other children that Ronnie is cheating? The ball flies through the woods and lands at the dead end, from which point it rolls down the street till it comes to the front yard. Dr. Little turns away from Uncle to look at something in the street and then, turning back, says, "You're a father to all the children."

Thanks to the sequence of all things living, we no longer doubt a time in which all was infinity. We look around and suddenly find manholes, chalk dust, lakes, and firing pins.

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What was once a fence is now a needle, and through that organ of life, the eye, passes a whole masquerade. Behind the most translucent of things, a deep-pitched tuning fork is beginning to vibrate of its own accord. This is magic, though not mysterious.

The backyard of this house was equally grave. Yellow rectangles and greenish circles spread out over the ground as grass. A bleached green hose lay coiled up against the house. Russell continued working on the big hole dug into the bank at the end of the yard marked by barbed wire. The great stone had been removed. He heard the flapping of the screen door, but went on with the digging. The hose had been dragged across the length of the yard. He turned on the spigot, ran to the edge of the pit, and waited. Trees fell in adjacent woods. The water spurted from the hose, and he directed its flow. The hole was filled.

The lighting is blue. This is a temporary museum. The handicapped lady is informative. The statues are polychromatically glazed wood. The windows are long and blue. A virgin and child, chipped cheeks, the butcher, a saint bathing, fingerless, another halo, felony, education, three meters, three musicians, a monocle, incapacity, and early flowers. Out in the square they refer to the fair taking place before their eyes. Another crowd takes over. In smaller streets, shops close down and shadows diminish. These streets, if pulled tight from either end of the town, snap. Ice cream is sold.

And so on through the forests of Fontainebleau. The gods had neither plan nor project. When they reached a sharp ridge that looked out over a dying savannah, they covered themselves with gauze and danced fiercely over the region. When they came to a family picnic, they blew the tires and tilted the land and enchanted the kickball. All around, the trees were full with the syrup of the gods. Bees came to the gods and pricked them one by one over and over, filling their veins with more of the same liquor. The forest became hotter and steamed like jungles. Heaps of pine needles fumed a luxuriant vapor. The bark oozed, and the most delicate of the flowers

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wilted. It was not that all the people froze into statues and that all the statues came to life. There was none of these. It was just the gods who swept across the arid clearings and through the heavy copses. It was nothing to bend one's belief.

Now you could see as far as Boulevard Richard Wallace. The trees were all flattened. They were cutting them down one by one for the new supermarket. Yellow bulldozers were already leveling some of the hills, and the last tree crashes were drowned out by the roar of the swathed and cushioned machines that stalked here as they had in the front yard the week before in order to take down, chop up, and cart away the unusually thick tree. Just on this side of the barbed wire Uncle was pushing the mower up the embankment of tough weeds. Here and there he was suddenly stopped by too large a clump of weeds. At the spot from which the immense rock had been moved, he pushed the mower freely and let it roll back down as the blades were still spinning. Somewhere in the midst of the action was the spark of a rock hit or of a wire cut.

This is a sky that suggests eyes down. A black road approaches this fence from far in the distance and veers off again. It is slowly covered with snow. Snow is everywhere, and the children's coats, too, lose their coloring. It is as if this fence unfolded with each successive coating of snow. Questions are asked and left in the air like smoke rings. Along the road comes a black limousine. "Madame?" For the window is rolled down, and no snow is getting in. The car stops. " 'Squeek'—that's no name." The fingers of the nun press against the children's necks as she leads them to the car. The snow didn't stop. "That's not a name."

A discussion ensues with the opponents. Is a ball that is relayed just as it touches the boundary line considered "out"? The puff of chalk dust, it is argued first of all, is evidence that the ball did hit the line. There is no doubting that. A lineman of the red team rubs a red sock on the opposite calf in readiness to kick in the out-of-bounds ball. The wooden wagon wheel on which he is obliged to stand slowly sinks in the muddy ditch. The discussion goes on. The umpire is non-committal,

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and the decision, like a ball, bounces from one side to the other. Questions become exclamations, arguments become threats, diagrams become punches, and victory unconsciousness. The game ends, and the lineman sinks slowly away.

Thus kingdoms expand. A mirror speaks. A song-bird is cut off, and generations of princes celebrate speechlessness. Each end suggests reverie and seriousness, each beginning the same. Each middle is peopled with inter-planetary storms and concepts, which liberal princes generally advocate. We hear that bird universally thought dead and then bear something forth in imitation. Other princes go on advocating these customs like so many clouds, and geese and pigeons squabble in the courtyard. A mirror speaks, saying "The palace shakes." In the tumult that follows, the mirror is shattered and the entire kingdom swallowed up.

Elyce stands up among the trees and the children who form a large circle around her and says, "This is no game for the sake of anything you could have horses for or singing bobsleds in a pinch I want to make it clear whatever you go on to do in sequence after sequence a game or the idea of a game always to promote good cheer among future children explaining why dust and locust filled the air one summer without rules but just to stick to what you're told and remember to connect up the one half that goes with the other to play the way that makes good never crossing but repeating even forever when necessary or blue fingers make you scared or cold as I do such things myself not for anyone's sake near the water tower when they leave the gate open but to continue a kind of multiplication table that gets to two and three digits after pulling your pants up you think up a higher form and remember a sweeter sound."

Deep in the gardens mademoiselle unbends and monsieur relaxes. One recalls a group of little elves, the other the branches. Not very far away the ground slopes down sharply. A fat pot hangs over a dead fire. Above, the trees seem to reign over the clouding sky. They had shed all their leaves during the night. A garden gate falls over. Somebody has picked it

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up, or rather, somebody must have, for it is back in place. And the castle: mademoiselle walks slowly again through the first seven chambers of the western wing, hoping this time to reach an eighth; monsieur again lets down the bridge over the moat and watches the rabbits hop away on the far bank.

The castle has not always been this way. Here warriors died inside heavy metal and under red and yellow flags. Over here some ruler decreed on what is now fragmented paper. Down here some poet hid from the rest of the court. It is as though these things made the castle, but of course these things appeared only as a result of the castle. Tapestries were hung out and made to graze the tips of grass. Flagons were filled and emptied with the regularity of rain. Blade edges were shined and sharpened on a kind of stationary stone. Satin cushions were depressed under elbows that supported fingers plucking the strings of lyres. It is as though these things died away as a result of the castle, but of course these things possessed an intrinsic end. At night torches glided over the pathways, their flames beating against the air. Gauze draperies puffed out beyond the windows and flew over the balconies. The blare of the great dining hall horns seemed to have a counterpart in the depth of the woods. Then, as if in the same chambered flower bed under the same arbor, Gradgeon released the dove, and Regalo looked through a tiny piece of curved glass, and new blood was shed in the Red Sea.

Mademoiselle walks slowly again through the first seven chambers of the western wing. As usual, off several of the chambers, she passes small anterooms whose entry is barred. In the first of these anterooms, the King has just been killed. He lies on the black-and-white tiled floor in a pool of blood. There is no bed, but only a dark oven and a hearth and a window whose shutters, like saloon doors, are swinging back and forth in smaller and smaller arcs, though never stopping. Another anteroom leads into a long narrow passageway that the Queen is backing down. Her hands sporadically fly up into the air above her. The further down she goes, the closer she seems to falling back against a wall or onto the floor. In another of the barred anterooms two knights divest themselves of their

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mail. Wearing only Maltese crosses around their necks, they set to polishing a coat of armor posed in the center of the room. They begin at the feet and vigorously work up to the empty helmet, climbing onto the shoulders when necessary. As the armor gets more and more brilliant, it begins to move, leading the knights by the slow action of its limbs. It then moves more quickly and in long steady sweeps, as the two knights begin gradually to disappear, first the feet, then upwards to the head. In another anteroom a friar steps from a bathtub onto a small white rug in the form of an oval. He takes from a tin box on the table several small pieces of candy. He returns to the tub, and, once having finished the candies, steps out again and goes back over to the table. Off the seventh chamber is an anteroom from which music issues. In the center of the room is a huge circular bed surrounded by torches. To one side of the bed is a tall-backed straight chair with a dark velvet covering, and to the other side is a chair with a deep cushion whose back, in the form of an undulated shell, curls back at its greatest height. Here mademoiselle stops and goes no further.

Monsieur again lets down the bridge over the moat. From the center of the area that many rabbits suddenly quit, a small jester rises, crosses the moat, and enters the Great Hall where he calls forth his actors. The two Kings confer. The Prince approaches them naked and then assumes his royal robes. One hands him a scepter, the other a sword. They prompt him with his lines and all goes well. There follows a procession down the Great Hallway that leads to the dining hall. Members of the courts and clowns participate. At the end of the passage the Prince sits down between two princesses who are engaged in conversation. He speaks to one, the more slender of the two, who turns and lowers her eyes to the ground. He then places his lips against her cheek and holds them there for a moment. In the Great Feast Room the wines and meats are spilling over the tables. The Prince awakens aside of the slender princess and goes to the jester for refreshment. The jester tells the Prince to get the cheeses from the kitchen. The cheeses are huge and slippery, and the Prince must grasp them securely against his chest. He manages to prevent them from sliding

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over the limits of his arms as he returns through the long dank hallways. The foundation arches deepen as the hallways turn into the Feast Room, and within the compartments thus formed, shielded by the series of columns that outlines the hall, are small musical ensembles, jack-in-the-boxes, card games, and giant picture books. Monsieur draws up the bridge whose clanks echo throughout the lower castle.

This is a climb that defies our stamina. Frère Lubin gave two beeps on his horn—*pour saluer*—and drove on toward Gérardmer. The pinball machines light up and clack by themselves. Soon the rain will get heavier. The telepherique wires shine like so many uncoiled pinball rebounders, and no one feels safe about taking a ride. The red earth sends its drippings down the mounting roadway. The mountain remains stationary.

When the bottle is broken, its contents spread through the table cloth. The breaking is instantaneous, the spreading gradual. Even after the glass remnants of the bottle seem empty, the tinted surfaces continue to pale and the stain borders continue, as in time-lapse photography, to push out over the cloth. It is as though this continent were ruled by a maniac, shattered by the lay of the land and labeled a nothing. And it is as though this maniac-King were actually ruled by the tide, forever extending his empire involuntarily. And it is as though his castle were whole, untouched, and far away. Several pieces of the bottle hang onto the moistened label, which remains intact as part of the unbroken base. When these are pulled away, like scabs, from the label, they are, though still sharp, rather clouded by the thin glue applied long before.

A farm passes by, and still it is not clear about the owner of this region. Fresh milk can be gotten at the farm, and chocolate can be added if desired. All around are deep ravines and sharp cliffs. The only workers are the cows. Flies hover nearby as witnesses. The milk is warm. Soon the day will be over, and a fresh question will arise. The first star passes by.

Animus is the animating or actuating spirit; in Latin, simply the mind. In a less specific way, it refers to the disposition

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or intention to do something. Traditionally, this disposition or intention is always very strong. For this reason, the term animus has also come to denote a feeling of hostility or hatred, resulting, for example, when the original animus is countered or challenged. Such animi resist most salves, whether in the form of materials or of love. Sometimes, however, a well-meaning animus, in the original sense, satisfies the sorest animi.

At the center of the house, Uncle sinks back in a living-room easy chair to doze. He meant to call up about going back to the city but forgot. His drivers have come anyway, or else have just stopped by on their way. The funny lady they visited in the house had never been seen there before. She wore an old print dress that had a tie around the waist and bare-heeled slippers. When she asked Uncle for some extra molding, he searched under all the cabinets. Though there was no molding, there were many other things:

two sets of rewinds
paper cups
rough planks
busted light bulbs
three half-used paint cans: gray, cream, and white
Elyce and Russell
sealing tape
Contact ("Pennsylvania Dutch")
a broken hair drier

Uncle finally felt anxious about the city departure and knew that all the presents being carried up and down the steps were for the children. One is always in the process of getting dressed in such instances. The presents were explicitly marked for Uncle. He thought the people would never get to the living room. And once they were there and had gotten their coats, he could only lead them out to the front yard. He leaned with one hand against the lawn mower as they left.

Out in the woods, Elyce is thinking of the bedroom. There she tells about another house, different from this one. It was Elyce's first house, a house of foreigners. There were so many people that some had to sleep outside in the back yard. And

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since they had no clothes, they slept naked, a man and a woman in each sleeping bag. They were the first people to have moved into the neighborhood, and they'd brought with them a black dog. They loved the dog so much that they took movies of it every day. But one day the dog wandered into a tunnel constructed for the subway, which was having a trial run in the neighborhood before going to the city. When the train came along, the dog was scooped up by the front car. The train continued through a maze of tunnels, nosing up and down, swerving right and left. Eventually, it came out of the ground onto a trestle that ran alongside a river. Then the black dog was thrown off the train and into the river. Elyce asks Russell one question: Was it right for them not to be allowed to watch the movies they had taken of the black dog?

Out in the fields, Ted tightens the shank of the sickle. It has taken him so long to return from the tool shed that it is now almost dark and snow is imminent. He is annoyed to have lost valuable working time, but it was imperative that he get the first-aid kit from the tool shed to bandage his nicked leg. He had lost his way when he headed back and couldn't find the exact spot where he had left off working. Instead, he came to an asphalt roadway that led through the woods to a fenced-in area. There, a boy and girl were playing together. Ted didn't get close enough to recognize the faces of the children, since he knew by this time that he was way off track. As he turned back down the roadway, trucks were being stopped and asked to contribute to local charities. Ted wandered through the fields and finally spotted his pitchfork leaning against a heavy, low-branched tree. Nearby were his sickle and the fading line of uncut weeds. Now they are slowly covered with snow. Snow is everywhere, and Ted's face, too, loses its coloring. He has barely gotten up from under the branches before he goes inside.

The hole in the backyard is filled with water, and now the production can begin. Russell directs his actors through the air. The Queen soon lies slain on the ground. Russell approaches the embankment at the end of the yard and, as he falls down on it, delivers his main line: "I am the cruelest man." Lying

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there in the loose dirt, he worries about remembering the rest of his lines. He had pressed the buzzer and was climbing up the stairway in Elyce's apartment building because she hadn't been at the door to meet him. As he wondered if he'd like to live in a place like this, the steps became carpeted. This flight led to Elyce's apartment, but Russell decided to go back down and wait for her at the door. On one landing that he passed he noticed a straight-edged razor blade. When he got to the stoop, Elyce and all their friends were there waiting. Over the intercom Elyce's mother repeated the same question over and over: "Why didn't you come all the way up?"

This is a factory that threatens the sky. The little managers are conferring on the lawn. What was yesterday's quota? Which way is the Quai d'Orléans? Slowly the sprinkler shoots its streams to the south and to the north. One of the managers points with his cigar. Other sprinklers begin to sway. Somewhere the grass was licked. Along the sidewalk stand sparkling plastic letters ten feet high: RENAU and so on. The blue bricks are scraped of their soot, and the white windows fog up.

When the green lights go on, not only are the branches and leaves given new luster, but also the ceiling of the night sky realizes a different height. The dust in the air passes in pensive sheets. Each leaf, as it waves, reveals the now sharply shadowed veins of its underside. Its tips are patterned perfectly against the tree trunk, and the ruined rocks pale at the spectacle. It is as though some urchin child were shining a flashlight at his most recent bit of mischievousness. And it is as though the act itself were quaking from exposure. And it is as though everyone else looked on approvingly or else aesthetically. The atmosphere is thick. The trees respond to more breeze than there is.

The horses enter the simulated park by way of the cobblestone pathways. Their hoofs resound against the Roman ruins that rise in front, as they gallop among the background trees. When the green lights come up their riders are revealed. These are the ghosts from Roman times disguised as German knights of the Middle Ages. They swarm across the lighted area,

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screaming and gesticulating toward the hill as if women, agoras, temples, and tribunals were all there. The great Prince approaches them and turns them all into rock. He enters the cave thus formed and loses his way forever.

Most important in this study is the question of color intensification. Dr. Little reports that the participants in the experiment repeatedly note that the color red, for example, gets brighter as successively greater amounts of heat are directed at it. (He goes on to prove a corresponding theory that actual intensification of a color generates greater heat, which can be measured tactually.) Nevertheless, scientists hold to the incontestable fact that additions of heat do not change, in any detectable way, the molecular composition of the light rays that make up the color. Tests have even been conducted in association with Dr. Little where the samples to which the participants react are measured as the heat is added. According to the marks on the response sheets, the red shades consistently grow brighter with greater additions of heat. The problem remains: must we offer a thesis of fact or read that the reds intensify?

Across from this funeral the artists have arranged an open-air show. Many of the paintings are hung from trees by wire, and others are set up on artificial easels. The artists lie down on rugs they have brought with them. Under the ground the dead man is cool. It is as if these pall bearers and holy men were preparing to launch an artistic career, fingering dust and watching the sway of new canvases. Little bands of children stray from the art show and stand on the edge of the road watching the funeral. A woman calls to her son to come and see a picture. Little girls ask what it's about. Straight red and yellow tulips, like so many girls or so many paintings, wave in the air.

At the central station art lovers from all around fill the platforms as they transfer to the train that will take them to their favorite part of the exhibition. Ladies with wide-brimmed hats crowd in front of the information kiosk to the point of obstructing the view, so that others must squeeze between them and stoop under the railing to get a look at the list.

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Oils	Forest line
Watercolors	Sun lake line
Pen and ink	Central pool local
Sculpture: marble	West hill roundabout
Sculpture: plaster	Lawn elevator
Sculpture: metal	Tower express
Sculpture: "furniture"	Highway local
Collages	Fruit and grain elevator
Constructions: wood	Insect line
Constructions: metal	Dome passage
Constructions: plastic	Refreshment-stand express

Lines grow before the elevators that carry the people from level to level. Trains puff slowly over the greens and under the bridges and into the woods. Various colored flagstones stipple the lawns and parks, leading the visitors on special tours. Here the pathway passes a brook where a car factory has been constructed out of inflated plastic. Here the pathway crosses metal grass. Another pathway leads to where some artist is lying.

A man honks his horn as he comes by in his car. At the same time, he swerves and just misses hitting several children who are on the point of crossing the road. The children wander back to the paintings. The man, lifting his right arm slightly into the air, turns toward the back seat and, with his lips curled, says something to the three people sitting there. It is at this moment that the car crashes. It runs head-long into a tree trunk, that makes up part of the art-show border, and bursts into flames. Leaves and bodies ignite. People from all over the countryside gather around and shade their sparkling eyes with saluting hands.

The helicopters came to bring first-aid supplies. They leveled off slowly, maneuvering between the trees of the countryside. Their soft whirring stopped only when their flat landing supports were planted firmly on the ground. From among the mass of onlookers, several artists stepped forth to unload the supplies and to perform the immediate surgery required. They devoted their entire energies to this delicate task. Women called to their children to come away. Holy men carefully

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crossed the road. Much of the surgery was performed, and many of the unlucky passengers remained alive for awhile, but by the time the helicopters, like so many balloons or so many ghosts, rose up slowly over the trees, the last of the victims died. They were raised forthwith on canvas stretchers and carried across the road where the prematurely abandoned funeral was taken up again. The holy men and pall bearers, rising to the occasion, gave out careful directions and managed the burials. The artists returned to their canvases. The people and the tow-truck moved slowly away from the charred tree. Not long before the sun set, the last special express pulled off for the central station. Now the field was empty.

This is a city that spreads its sensation, belonging indoors, out to every structure. It is Friday, the day of departure. Clouds gang together from peak to peak and hang still, as if suspended from the Haute Ecole de Meteorologie. Picnickers lie down on their checkered cloths. They are wearing watchbands of camouflage canvas, which fade into the landscape perfectly. Desserts are bought from the eighteen shops that dot the city's straight streets. The rain didn't stop. One of the picnickers, a blond girl whose name sounds like glazed pears, motions toward something and says, "These are Caesar's." The sound that repeats itself in the distance reminds one of the "mysteries" of the Isère, which makes more than one street bend. Another of the picnickers, a young man with glasses and a nose to support them, looks up and says, "Is it really six o'clock?" It is. A third, a poet who is eating a chicken leg, says, "Richesse, mon oncle, quelle est la vraie saison?" They are all sacrificed to the city. On the opposite mountain, signals are exchanged between two outposts.

It was certain that there would be a window opened. Near that window, apart from the leaning shelves, the concave ground, and the broken tea cups, there was a photograph of a blond girl pinned to the wall. The smile on her face was so candid that, like panoramic travel posters, it seemed to make a hole in the wall that it lay against. When the two of them, late at night, came through the window, they landed on the

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oil-stained linoleum floor almost soundlessly. The Danish girl in the photograph, if she was there, took them for officials. They had what they wanted and then left just as quickly, though not by the window. The impression that remained, both in the wall and in the mind, was one of murder, rape, and deceit. Off in the distance of the photograph, another figure was discovered that resolved whatever mystery there was. The Dane was again seen at Bellegarde.

The lake spirits, with the sun, leak slowly away from the Lac de Paladru to join their friends the river spirits. The rectangles that command the area, the mooring station, the Place de Verdun, the Place Victor Hugo, and the public swimming pool, are, for a moment, all the same. Then the water changes, and the first legions of lake spirit soldiers, to the river spirits, appear. By the time all the lake spirits, the bridegroom's entourage, have assembled near the mooring stations, the lake prince and the river princess are next to each other and surrounded by musicians. Currents encircle their heads. The kings and queens gather together in front of the couple and, touching their scepters all at once, the river stops flowing. Up and down the shores, the reeds freeze and the moist earth dries up. Wooden piers cake. Foam disappears. The prince and princess then are joined, and the river comes to life again. The spirits disperse, the lake spirits returning upstream, and the mooring station brightens.

This is the season's end of dull sensations. Inward the blade has fallen, and the wires have criss-crossed. Money collects at every aperture and clogs the motion. Broken white lines divide the avenues of insubordinance; acquiescence crosses minds everywhere. What was once most resented is now resented and cherished; what was most at odds is corrupt and congruent. A certain height is attained on this mountain, and the clouds vanish. Here on the table some bread sits, insatiable. Lands end and will not ever restructure.

As the moderator draws to a conclusion, Dr. Little leafs hurriedly through the stack of papers he has with him. Graphs and diagrams fly by in the dim light of the auditorium wings.

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He now reshuffles several sets of these papers. He begins going through them from the top one by one, as if counting them, but stops after a dozen or so. He looks around him, under the chair, near the thick wires. He checks his pockets and brief case. The moderator backs up from the lectern and carefully makes his way down the small steps to its side. It is at this moment that someone approaches Dr. Little, says something smiling, and guides him toward the entry to the stage. Dr. Little places his pile of papers and his small notebooks on the lectern and consults his watch. Graphs and diagrams are mounted across the air. The audience looks.

"Experiments were then performed by raising and lowering patients, while they were sleeping. Of course, these patients would be informed about the operating of the experiment before they went to sleep. They were shown a short film that depicted the elevator mechanism, the mirror arrangement between sleeping room and data room, and the various instruments that were set up on very sensitive tripods around each bed. In several cases, technicians actually entered the sleeping rooms to measure with small, intricate instruments, such things as ear pressure and muscle tone. They were all fed the same special meals during twenty-four hours in our own cafeteria. In short, all variables were scrupulously kept to a minimum. The results were, in general, that lowering seemed most often to suggest to the patient's dream undressing or embarrassment resulting from some kind of immodesty. Raising, on the other hand, usually meant being threatened by some unnameable source and often choked. Some patients, however, did not reflect in the slightest way these movements during their hours of sleep. While most whose dreams were affected said that they remembered being aware of some motion during the night, these others claimed to remember no such movements. What is remarkable is that most of these latter cases did nonetheless have peculiar dreams. Their dreams characteristically included all the elements of the experiment, but as they actually existed (as they saw them in the film) and not as the patients were affected by them. One patient, for example, saw many of his friends riding in an elevator. He was asked by an

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important person about a broken mirror and went to the other side of town to borrow a tripod. The overwhelming anxiety that marks such dreams as these, according to the patients, is having to recall accurately the effects of the experiment."

Definition is the explanation of a meaning or the formulation of this meaning. It is used for words, concepts, and processes, and is one of the basic operations in scientific deduction. Definition is also the act or power of making clear or of bringing into sharp relief. In this sense, we refer, for example, to the distinctness of outline in a picture as good definition. In most cases, however, the goodness or badness of definition cannot be measured by visual clarity. Definitions of words, for example, depend on the accuracy and forethought with which they are composed. They also depend on which meaning of the word is being treated. Some people think that a particular definition, whether accurate or imperfect, predicts and forms the whole process that follows. Others think that any definition, no matter how composed, may either reveal an already existing meaning or else imply a meaning that altogether alters the underlying idea.

DATA REPORT

The major part of these results have, of course, never heretofore been published. I must therefore begin by thanking all those assistants, technicians and patients who made the experiments possible. Never before have we come up with such singularly revealing results. Probably the most significant aspect of these results is the manner in which they give us insights into the sleeping man. All the doors are wide open now. There is more

CONFESSION

Heretofore where do four lost papers from the major part graphed data cycles of repetition indications of tardy schedules the train was therefore—thanking the Negro woman technical probability getting it getting run over getting it assist me possibility reveal dark—the popsicle wrapper is it probably written without ancestors leading to a different sight the bridal veil and the ear examiner what I see naked or posing is it in—what I

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room for expansion and exploration than ever before. For man is not always a particularly mobile and sensate animal—at least not always in the same way. Each time he sleeps he enters a new world of motion which he has created for himself. External motion has been seen in these experiments to be often important in sleep behavior, though not always in dream content. Variations in physiological processes cannot always accurately describe the interior world the sleeping man is experiencing. Rather, this world becomes the ruler of the body and, in many cases, of the mind as well.

think wider elevator shifts before fudged data mechanism new areas withdrawal swimming sighting watching in mirrors walking tasting gaining access the same cafeteria never before floor never before food never before world into long-distance moving pianos shoulders clocks tripods setting up model room in the sleeping room naked is it in the ear hears behavior signs of posing to be content pose naked sublimations contortion on the carpet interior search "checking" pays the movers finds out pays "publishing" other reports world diagram how big lay the graphs discover the pages "inventing" for train screw find.

We are the ones that were found here. All over the red rocks, all through the jasmin crop, all over the road. The girls were going only to a nearby lake which was well known. The boys were going down to the seashore. The sun questioned both groups, approaching from behind. Deep in the cool water the coral formations crossed, and there were bubbles around them. Each jasmin bloom, like a small planet that turns slowly, swayed in the wind. Each is plucked. They have met here, the girls who were found on the main square buying garlic and the boys who checked each of the sea-front hotels for employment, to pick the crop. We are the ones to hold out each basket and to wait for its slow load. From deep in the middle of the house the cry of breakfast is heard. Then they

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will leave, the girls returning to the seaside restaurant for fried fish and the boys to the station for the Paris train.

The meadows grow silent. A face appears again in an upstairs window of the police station that hugs the edge of a road. "The base of my right shoe broke." Near the bright sand concrete of the new locks under construction a man quietly puts his melon crop out for sale. There are sharp knives. At the waterfall young girls are drinking. It is the waterfall by the old Roman aqueduct. "The base of my right shoe broke." Metal cylinders are ground into shape, files line the deck. The sun, still bright, dries up the discarded melon seeds. Other melons split open wide. A large shadow covers over the police station, and the long grass bends. A face reappears. The gleaming locks are checked, first tightened, then unloosened.

At the furthest reach of the argument, a specific concern, a central point even, was discovered. It had not been previously hidden, but merely prepared for with great elaboration and minute explication. It was as if these houses, built by various city people who could afford a summer home, outlined this point and cultivated it and made it habitable. Children played on the beaches at the edges of the point, as well as on the playgrounds of the grassy middle strips. Once when the ball flew from the playground down the street to the front yard, Dr. Little turned back to Uncle, saying, "You're a father to all the children." For most of the year, however, the point was without people. For months the sun was never hot on the red rocks, and the coral grew dull. The grass, for some time at least, would become weeded and wild and eventually overgrow all its boundaries. The point was of course attached to the mainland, but often at this time thick fogs mounted from the sea in such a way that the mainland was indistinguishable or else seemed very remote. The houses remained there, shut up, and occasionally a falling limb would break a window. This and other such anonymous incidents were easily reckoned with once the people returned and set up house again for a small portion of the year. They set at once to gardening and mending. They took great pride in their land segments on the point and helped each other to maintain them. It was as if they

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were making a point of giving an overall impression of fine cultivation, a concern that would require many related queries and counterarguments.

And then a screen is a partition or curtain that cuts off inconvenience, injury, or danger. Sometimes it is almost entirely opaque, such as when made of a meshed fabric and used to separate coarser from finer parts. At other times it is simply some sort of protective barrier whose material may be a perforated plate or the more elaborate criss-crossing of wood or metal segments. In the case of metal screening, long sheets of very regular meshing are often manufactured to be fitted into a wooden doorframe, which acts as an outer door. This frame is painted white and half-way up its length has a simple metal latch, which is released by the hand of Mademoiselle, who, in doing so, steps out onto the sunny patio. The extremities of the patio cannot be seen because of the thick heat, and, as she lets the screen-door go and proceeds across the cement, Mademoiselle similarly loses sight of the castle walls. The wind off the sea blows some of the heat at her; she turns toward the sea, which is also at present invisible, and then goes on. She advances to where some high hedges, a sort of barrier between the patio and the marshes, are providing shade. At the other end of the patio Monsieur lies out on a long cushioned chair. The sun starts setting, and the air is filled with heavy red colors. Monsieur's chair forms a long shadow that starts expanding across the patio toward Mademoiselle. All around the woods darken and the bogs humidify and the castle fades.

They have now all descended. The air between objects drums with them. Minor stratospheres are built up above the grass, above the pavements, above the water. The sea spirits roll in slowly with the fog that thickens over the beaches. The river spirits splash higher and higher as the currents lash out. The lake spirits rise across the rays of reflected light. The marsh spirits dive between high stalks and floating blossoms. The forest spirits buzz around the branches and load the pathways through the thick trunks. The field spirits form informal regiments in a billowing patchwork. The castle spirits hover over

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lattices and around turrets. The statue spirits reverberate with the white glow of the marble. They have all descended; at last they have a project. Enchantment and excitation are now old habits, and trickery is set aside for the moment. They cover every realm, and, with their infinite powers of measurement, will extract the pattern of nature. Now as the sun starts setting and the ground seems everywhere to have just been pounded across by a single speeding horse and the oceans seem set to boil by the fires at the pit of the earth, a universal pulse is taken. The spirits fan out and record. They exist, like a tuning fork, around and in-between each thing. They intersect and separate.

For a long time the spirits had been developing this project. They had extraordinary powers, of course, from the very beginning, but they were manifested, like a firecracker, in every direction at once without covering the widest of ranges. They wanted to be everywhere at the same time, and in a sense, they were. But they could never coordinate all their effects and observations. So they decided to take hold of their powers and to direct them with a purpose. At first there were arguments as to what their purpose was, but then they agreed that it was a total, uncompromising report of nature that they sought. They figured that, by taking precise stock of their strength, they would be able perpetually to reflect the odd sense of being that they experienced all around them.

Thus did these discriminations prove interesting. Trees bent against the forces of the wind. Bricks were cemented in more or less straight lines. Songbirds sang out in the night, and people were observed listening to them. Mirrors reflected faces, objects, and actions. Princes shifted scepters. Blacktops slowly caved in. Large machines oozed specks of grease at their joints. The land expanded and retracted. And above all, there was nothing to bend one's belief. But before very long, the spirits grew tired of sensing and knowing everything around them. Their infinite intersections and separations were exquisite but, like a molecular catalogue, already explored. Their work, in its extreme closeness, became, just as they had expected, entirely patterned, and, as if owing to it, nothing ever went

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wrong. This made it seem at the beginning that the spirits were in control of something magnificently balanced, but actually they were simply noting it.

The spirits fan out and record. The pattern rises and reduplicates, like so many wave lengths of sound or of light. Deep within the bonded structure of their operations and far outside the gigantic manifestation of their total activity, all goes well. But slowly the spirits are developing another project, a project that entirely supercedes their previous one. Their functioning has become almost automatic, and now they relax and direct their attention to what they are actually doing from moment to moment. They suddenly recall their rash, splendid beginning, their remarkable power poured into everything around them. They get drunk with themselves and their manipulations. It is as though some generator were operated like a planet on the quantum-reversal rule. And it is as though the turning cranks, like so many irritated people, started coming to life all at once. And it is as though each revolution provoked an impression of disintegration, though nothing ever changed. Tapestries, statues, and clocks all confer with the spirits. The perfect-pitched tuning fork suggests a thousand tones, each of which is rejected, though not unheeded.

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Philip Whalen

Labor Day 6:IX:65

There is St Ignatius Church
There is Point Bonita
There is a bug like a wasp
    its giant antennae
    flail and thwack the concrete in its path

Fennel green and yellow lace
Great moss rose a flowery shaving-brush

You're the only creature I really love
Aside from Mama and my Teddy bear
I never miss you until I think of you
Now you love lots more than I
No matter how often we meet you never see me

I've become an old man
Soon I'll be keeping cats and goldfish
A large photo album of the days when I was middle-aged
In love with you and expecting immortal fame.

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The Task Rejected

We all went to the Zoo.
That's one thing done.

The sun shone, light foggy clouds blew past
The animals were variously disposed (waking or sleeping)
We saw the lions being fed
We ate hot dogs.

The koala bears are wintering in San Diego
They return in August. It is rumored that Bubu is *enceinte*.
The coatis are mangy, the gibbons shout
What about the sooty mangabee, what about
enormous pigeons nearly three feet high
powder blue, diaphanously crowned
What did Clark Coolidge say then?

Hawaiians laughed at the Macaws, tree-climbing kangaroos
Toni Coolidge wanted soda pop. There it was.

We did not visit The California Palace of the Legion of Honor.

3:IX:65

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Lemon Trees

Portable garden, Bill's shed in Point Richmond. Moth
ripple in the air. Moth holes in air that walks around
ALIVE
these flying dust wings flap. Air
quiver, a shaky curtain.

Explain the spherical gastank.
a) it holds more b) it is stronger c) its shadow is
a circle on the wall d) aluminum paint
keeps it clean and cool

I have nothing to say about the American "commitments" in
Viet Nam at this time, except I DON'T LIKE IT

★

Perhaps today I understand the saying
"We're all miserable sinners." (Understanding it
isn't the same as believing it or being frightened by it.)

★

DEATH YOUR HEAVY FOOT TIRED SLEEPY
DEATH HOODED ALIVE NEUROTOXIC
DEADLY CORAL APPROACHING SNAKEPIT
ENTER HERE

★

289 years the T'ang Dynasty (A.D. 618–905)
U.S.A., 176 years & still functioning?

24:X:65

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The Winter

for Burton Watson

Why do I fear the true winter death to come
I guess I've lived without seasons much too long
I hate having to think of weather and falling down in wet
icy snow and mud my knees all skinned, pants all soaked
Every winter I lose my balance
Every cloudy day a nervous breakdown

Darker, darker, darker I can't see good even when it's light
In the blackness I can't move or work
Forgetting that most of the universe Jupiter, Neptune, Pluto,
Out beyond is black and cold nothing to eat
Blake's demons rage and govern, smashing suns with back-
hand swipe

I open up the doors and windows, destroy my crowded rooms
Let the dying garden flop into the house
Here are camellias blooming: November and the bushes cov-
ered with flower buds
A few luscious pink, incandescent white already open
Here's a yellow kind of daisy with high thick stems

There's no explaining these yucca plants blooming the second
time this year
November cold nights and sloppy rains
Some kind of cactus crossed with palmetto
Giant lily of the valley sword spike leaves
How did they get here in front of the tobacco/funeral supply/
/stationery store/

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I thought I 'd seen the last of them shooting out of the walls
King's Canyon, California
Here they are at Ginkakuji-michi: maybe Sesshu painted some,
remembered them from China, I don't know

I go visit the gold Buddha at Hyakuman-ben, put 2¢ in the box
(change from the bath money)
Walk once around his house for luck
He just sits there about 12 feet high, gold leaf on cryptomeria wood
300 years dusty, emanating 13 small and myriad smaller Buddhas
Nothing else to do:
For love, for luck, for nothing
Raising his gold hand, palm outwards, "Don't be afraid."

II.

After pleading with myself this morning to start writing I gradually filled up a lot of pages. Now I tell myself, "At last I'm free of That." Ten o'clock at night. Rain.

W. C. Williams (in conversation): "After all, that's what we live for—splendor."

Where did I buy this great big case of indecision. Blinky day of sunny clouds, endless variations, white on white.

The cold, what do I care about the WEATHER
Things elegant as Myoshinji, Daitokuji lasted
through more than four hundred such blasts

I freeze on the concrete island Higashioji Street drunk
I must see Chion-in by moonlight, 40 below, I'll get arrested

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But it's all roped and chained! They don't want to see nobody.
I walk on down to Kennin-ji, Chinese roof at moonrise
Somebody puke in the alley, I hear sound of *geta* coming
What's it worth if you can't see it at night, dear Honen
Shonin?
Kennin-ji, already half ruined, lets me sound four thumps
on each great corner post, first Zen temple in Kyoto
Beyond is noise of town, like Portland, Seattle, some
minor west-coast city

Orion stands just ahead of me above trees, only a little above
bell tower roof
Moon a scrambled mess of roaring clouds

I sit and write on cold stones the clouds and stars
above Imperial Gate I'm in flood of mercury light
that guards the temple's massive wooden doors
I could get warm if I had ¥ 20,000 to spend, to throw away
To the weather!

III.

I have to do everything
NOW
The weather's too undependable, not really interesting
I don't have time to fool with it
Finding out what's my job has taken forty years
I've got to work at that. The color of leaves
distracts me.

I imagine January horrors, February no possibility of life—
All right—loom, forebode, threaten—
I've suffered the whole show four months ahead of time
Now I hope I'm free of it,
Let the coal-oil heater stink and blacken!
Yah, yah, yah! I'm tired of my imaginary winter—
Worse than the real would ever dare to be!

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Now I imagine food, music, the Viet Nam war, the
characters
of my friends, all my unfinished books, a visit to
the Schonbrunn Palace, the Vatican Museum, what
do I think of them, what do they
think of me
How much do I really want anybody, anything

IV.

I was living in a little house, all my books were there. Trees lined all the streets. I came back to find bare, fresh-plowed earth; a few of the books were standing on a shelf in an open-front wood construction-gang boss shack. Total personal desolation, death of balls, belly removal—as in dream of lost Blake volume, two years ago.

Now I'm luckier, I can walk in the sun to the coffee palace Shinshin-do, sit in the pergola and watch the goldfish.

I told myself, waking, "It ain't just them books you're about to lose, it's the skin, the world, the voice and ear and Philip are all on their way OUT." ...and writing all this wisdom distracted by the fact that I don't know the Japanese word for "pepper" which I'd like to have on top of this tomato juice I'm drinking—not that this delicious slice of lemon and its attendant handful of ice are not delightful—

*

There is no possible metaphor simile or plain statement which can describe my joy. I was able to walk down the street and smile at the people I saw—all of us existing in compassion, wisdom and enlightenment. I'll go to Hyakumanben pretty quick and put a penny in the buddha-box, many thanks & c.

I saw this tiny ancient lady, for example, stopped dead in

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the sidewalk. Maybe she forgot where she was, suddenly sick or just tired—but I could see she was all right, living or dying.

★

shack I lost—where was it? I feel, now, it was in The Dalles where big sycamore and horse chestnut and black walnut trees line the streets... Berkeley, for the little house? But I see so much tearing down and rebuilding here in Kyoto, it might as well have been the present scene. I suppose that since I want to connect it all with The Dalles, it must be a symbol of my mother's death—and of my father's, last year—the fresh grave in squared-off cemetery lot.

★

I opened a drawer and saw by chance a page of writing which I'd put away a long time ago and forgotten. I closed the drawer, I hopped and gloated and laughed, triumphing, completely maniacal, demoniac. No one will ever guess why.

Kyoto 31:X—2:XII:66

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Winter Range

Robin Metz

Ten miles south of Norfolk, Vonnie took the Tourguide map from the Rambler glove compartment and spread it out across her knees. Plotting rough co-ordinates on a Portsmouth —Nags Head axis, she ignored the printed mileage chart and gauged the distance south with a makeshift caliper of thumb and index finger. "We're way ahead of schedule, you know," she said apprehensively, tracing a horizontal crease from the Outer Banks to the Blue Ridge Mountains. "Hours."

"Good," he said without enthusiasm. "Great."

"Carter, what I mean is—" She stopped abruptly, clasping her hands above the tricolored web of access roads. He seemed not to hear, more probably not to care. Oddly enough, she felt relieved, thankful her anxiety had not drawn him out too soon. For a moment she sat still, rewording her appeal. Then, tilting the map toward her, she dipped the frayed edge and peered again at the fuel gauge. The needle rested squarely on E. "What kind of mileage are we making, anyway?" she asked with strained nonchalance.

"So-so, I guess," he shrugged.

She nodded, more to herself than to him, more in willingness to believe than in confirmation of it. Maybe now's the time, she thought. Maybe he hasn't noticed yet. Maybe the gauge was jammed. Was that so impossible? Knowing better, she shifted in the seat to face him, ruffling and smoothing the map like an apron, fidgeting to draw attention. The scowl distracted her. "Carter, Sligo is twenty-four miles," she blurted.

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"Oh yeah?" He rocked back slightly, flexing his shoulders.

"Carter—"

"Say it for crissake, Vonnie."

With an effort she checked herself again, fumbling for her sunglasses in the wicker traveling bag between them. They were too large for her, continually skidding down the bridge of her nose with any sudden movement, but she wore them regularly and without complaint. Carter would be furious if he knew, she realized. He had spent nearly a week in search of lightweight Polaroids, which he argued were practical in the long run despite the expense. Amused by his defensiveness, she had grinned affectionately (*Carter, it's me you're talking to, remember?*) and let it go at that. There was a time when she might have responded differently—with bitterness perhaps—but she had since learned to live with petulance and inconsistency, come to understand him, admire him even. Now, holding her head steady and her chin uncomfortably high, she stared at him through amber-tinted lenses, hoping to convey something of that admiration if nothing else. In profile his features seemed more relaxed—the surliness had drained from his forehead and his sallow cheeks, funneled from them really, pursing his lips in a silent, private whistle.

" 'Danny Boy'?" she asked tentatively. She knew he sometimes liked to whistle "Danny Boy" or "Beautiful Dreamer," depending on his mood, and she had always been responsive though she had no taste for them herself.

He kept his eyes trained on the highway. "Gershwin, okay? Sousa. Francis Scott Key."

"Mind if I listen?" she asked, smiling, trying urgently to sound lilting, lyrical, melodic, a fit accompanist for her husband.

"Look, Vonnie. Let me tell you something—"

There was no need for him to continue. She turned quickly away, smothering remorse by refusing to admit it, contemplating instead the gray, indifferent bank of clouds that had followed them since morning. Harshly metallic now, the autumn sky was swollen with thunderheads—a dense, murky sky, no longer distant or impersonal. Small, darting birds, she

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noted, were clustered in the sumac thickets near the road, and as she watched, a stand of pine that screened her view of the coast began to sag and swirl to life with the promise of stiff winds. "Carter, you could turn around," she said, removing her sunglasses nervously. "There was a Gulf Station—"

Out of the corner of her eye she saw him grip the steering wheel more tightly, set his jaw in studied defiance. Instinctively, she groped for the arm rest to brace herself. When he braked, swerving violently for the sloping, russet-graveled berm, she thrust her shoulders back and wedged them hard against the door. Panic wadded her throat, and she did not cry out. Only the clatter of coarse stone striking underneath the chassis signaled their skid in time to curb him. As he veered abruptly left, she felt the front tires clutch the sunburnt shoulder and scramble for the pavement. The wicker bag swayed forward on the seat and toppled, yawning Kleenex, pencils, chewing gum and unmailed postcards to the floor. They coasted to a halt. She waited, speechless and wide-eyed, not yet releasing her grip. Ignoring the explanation her open stare demanded, he yanked the hand brake, notched the automatic shift on PARK. "You drive," he said with a blandness that astounded her. "I'll walk."

Seeking refuge in submission, she began to fold the map, mutter a confused apology. He stalked away in silence. Not yet believing, half expecting some signal from him, a familiar grin, the leather-smooth laugh (*Had you worried, baby, huh?*), she forced herself to wait, to watch an orange van loom up in the mirror, gather speed on the downgrade and rumble past: ALLIED VAN LINES. "You Can Always Trust—" The slogan blurred.

As the last of the diesel roar drained away to the south, she bent to straighten up the clutter on the floor, resisting for another moment the backwash of stillness. Languidly, almost imperceptibly, the red dust filtered down across the windshield, corroding the world about her. Even Carter, striding resolutely toward some secret vision of wind-swept sky and glass-green sea, seemed blunted and diminished by the effect. *You Can Always Trust.* She caught her breath. Just beyond a

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battered mileage marker he had paused to glance at her, as if for once regretting the distance he had carved between them. For a moment it seemed he might trudge back repentently or cup his hands and shout, *I love you, I love you.* Instead, he crouched and pried loose pebbles from the lip of black macadam, standing again to lob them sidearm at the fringe of scrawny trees.

Vonnie lifted the wicker bag and set it upright on the seat. She replaced the map. Sheltered beneath an awning of uncertainty, she watched him stoop to gather still more gravel. Wistful and aloof, he seemed strange and very distant to her—less the man she knew than some bronzed child of sun and summer haze. She looked away. She slid across the seat and sat erect behind the wheel, releasing the hand brake purposefully, adjusting the rear-view mirror. Then, laying her head back on the seat, she began to laugh, softly at first, but wading numbly toward hysteria, puzzling, puzzling what to do, whatever in the world to do.

★

A copy editor on *The Trenton Times*, Edward Carter Hoit likened himself, only half-jokingly, to an urchin at a gaudy carnival: with New York swaying to exotic rhythms north of him and Philadelphia, grubby and scandalous, just across the state line to the south, he was forced to peek furtively through a rent in the canvas, gleaning what he could from the drab, prosaic stage props of "The Garden State." TRENTON MAKES—THE WORLD TAKES. He had to laugh. Heroically spanning the Delaware, that billboard voucher to industrial prominence did nothing more for Trenton than reveal its civic paranoia. He saw it everywhere he went—waitresses, cabbies, parking lot attendants, sullen and suspicious, eyeing him distrustfully as if to say, *Screw you—this time I made it, and I'm gonna keep it for myself.* It was suffocating. Worse than smog. Worse because you could not take a week's vacation and be certain to escape it. He could not in any case. And that was something Vonnie, born and raised in Trenton, might never understand.

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After two years of casual dating, most of which consisted of weekend picnics in Cadwalader Park and Sunday drives to the Jersey shore—Cape May in the summer, Atlantic City in the fall and spring—and now almost three years of marriage, Carter had begun to feel that he knew Vonnie better than she knew herself. For one thing she was indecisive. And altogether too dependent. They had been dating less than a month when he discovered she was willing to express a certain discreet passion, assuming he maintained a parallel restraint: propriety was the issue, but the burden of responsibility was entirely his own.

Propriety, discretion, decorum. That was always the issue. It was something Carter came to understand and, for the most part, to accept. There were times, of course, when he pushed beyond the bounds impulsively, but in the months preceding the wedding he had done his best to oblige: he accompanied Vonnie to Korvette's and helped select their dining room ensemble; he drove her mother fourteen miles to the Princeton Cemetery and hugged her when she wept beside a brother's grave; he drank beer every evening with her father, discussed his future plans, agreed finally to leave the UPI in Philadelphia and accept the *Times* position. ("The way I see it, Carter—why fight that Philly traffic if you don't have to?") In short, he did what needed to be done. Now after two summers vacationing at her parents' Ocean City cottage, he felt the time had come to make a break, both for Vonnie's sake and for his own. He deliberately requested his vacation in November and selected the Outer Banks from a wealth of travel brochures. As Carter saw it, only on that remote and barren cape could the inhibitions of a lifetime melt away.

Things thus far had not gone well: the farther from her parents Vonnie got, the more dependent she became. There were the postcards, for example. They had stopped to eat in Wilmington and somehow wound up with a stack of them. He could see it now: *Dear Mom and Dad—Well, here we are in Wilmington. Circled DuPont Building twice (Carter missed the turn) and had breakfast nearby. Wish you were here. Love, V.* Carter wondered if there was mail delivery on the Banks. He sup-

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posed there was. He supposed her mother would send them anxious letters: *I worry so, dear—a man in daddy's office said to watch out for the undertow.*

And then there was the Tourguide. Vonnie's father, an AAA life-member with a decal on his windshield, had insisted they obtain it from a local agency. ("I mean, look at it this way, Carter—it's their business to know about that sort of thing, right?") Now every time they passed a battery of road signs, Vonnie's face would cloud, and she would rummage in the glove compartment for the map. Or if the fuel gauge showed them running low, she would calculate the miles/gallon against the distance to the nearest town and eventually suggest they turn back to refuel. The first time, somewhere in Maryland, he had laughed good-naturedly and turned around to please her. By the time they reached southern Virginia the joke had worn thin. Already eyeing the gauge unconsciously himself, Carter began to wish they would run out of gas. The projected hopelessness of such a plight thrilled him unexpectedly. Vonnie would be terrified, of course, but then again it might teach her something worthwhile. They could hitch a ride to Nags Head or even walk if necessary—what the hell. They could walk hand-in-hand along the dusty highway, and he would point into the dank, veiled world of the marsh and proudly share its secrets with her: *Now there's a sweetgum and over there's a yaupon—you know, yaupon tea?* Eventually she would get tired of walking and plead with him to go for help. It was only natural. She was a woman. But he would stand firm, urge her on. Sooner or later they were bound to reach a farm, a diner—a motel. Of course. A lonely, tumbledown motel. E-Z REST TOURIST COURT. SOUTHERN PINES MOTOR LODGE. He could see it all. Vonnie would sigh with relief, and then she would laugh. She would laugh, and he would laugh with her because the worst was all behind them. Then, laughing still, they would step inside together and confront the clerk. The clerk would be wary and officious no doubt. He would regard them suspiciously as they leaned across the desk to sign the register, and as he handed them a key, he would leer and ask, *Help you with your bags or anything?*

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Vonnie would blush. Carter would stare at the clerk impassively. Then, savoring the pause, he would answer in a quiet, manly voice, *No thanks, friend. No bags.*

Pleased with the thought, Carter began to whistle "Danny Boy" again, lounging in the musky, soft-hued melody. Glancing toward the Rambler, he found it easy to ignore regret: left alone, Vonnie would be free to see herself, forced to grant he hadn't been unreasonable. He loosened a chunk of slag from the embankment and tossed it idly at a rotting stump some thirty yards away. When he heard her grind the starter, his stomach tensed with expectation. Because he would not turn or in any way express an interest, the crescendo of another, deeper drone at first made no impression. It took the air-horn blast to jar him from complacency. He turned and glimpsed the Rambler edging toward the pavement, heard her floor it, flood it, stall it, saw her flounder on a groundswell of fear and indecision, saw too the silver-blur bus rushing into sound and focus. GREYHOUND/CHARTER. He read the words without distortion, filed them somewhere in a secret corner of his mind, refused to see the letters stretching taller, broader, refused to hear the air-horn blare a second, more insistent warning. He ran because there were no means of standing still.

The Greyhound swerved heavily. It hurtled past on thickset momentum and bullied him off stride. Watching the Rambler slump back to the safety of the berm, Carter recovered his pace quickly and sprinted the remaining twenty yards. He glared at her. He kicked once at the tire and pounded the bright, sloping hood with his fist. Bam. "Get outa there, Vonnie. You hear me!" Bam. BAM. "C'mon, get outa there, I said!"

Vonnie climbed out slowly. "Carter—" she began in a shaky voice. She was very pale and unsteady on her feet, and she held to the door with one hand. With her other hand she brushed the hair back from her eyes.

He could not stand still. Bobbing his head, he shuffled and weaved and circled about her. "See? See this?" he pleaded, he raged, he shook his swollen fist. "See what you did now!"

*

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There was nothing Vonnie could have said, nothing he would listen to. She made no attempt to bridge the silence between them, accepted it merely for what it was—incompetence—his, hers, theirs. She watched him closely, conscientiously, as if this were a kind of penance. Passing recklessly on blind curves, he laid claim to both lanes, refused to yield the right-of-way under any circumstance. Once he forced a dented pick-up off the road. Turning dully in the seat, she saw it bound across a narrow drainage ditch, wobble to a halt amidst tall roadside weeds.

Nine miles north of Sligo they overtook the Greyhound. Triumphantly, he thrust in close behind it, glided for a moment on the wind drag, urged the Rambler powerfully abreast. Vonnie sat up very straight and covered her face with her hands. The Greyhound eased ahead again. The Rambler was straining, whining, trembling slightly, and she knew he would ignore her now no matter what. She closed her eyes. She bit her knuckles, and they were past. They were past, and he was laughing strangely, slowing down, and she thought, he'll stop now, if I ask him now, he'll stop.

He did not stop. He did not stop in Sligo or in Barco either. By the time they reached Point Harbor forty minutes later, it no longer seemed important. Huddled in the corner of the seat, she saw the red-star Texaco fully a mile ahead and, beyond it, the bridge in silhouette against a leaden sky, saw it and felt nothing. Beside the single Fire-Chief pump a signboard clanged against its wrought iron frame: GAS WAR. Carter snorted. Not another service station was in sight.

Graceless and sodden, Wright Memorial Bridge spanned the brawny neck of Currituck Sound, linking the Carolina mainland to Bodie Island three miles distant. They had barely reached the center span when she felt the Rambler heave and sputter to silence beneath them. Reeling-in momentum, they skimmed the gray muscle of the Sound for another quarter mile before the Rambler lulled and stopped. "Well," he announced. "Well, well. So."

Vonnie folded her hands in her lap. "Are we out of gas now, Carter?" she asked quietly.

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"Sometimes you amaze me," he said. "Really, I mean it."

"What do we do now?"

"Do what you want," he said, opening the door and stepping from the car. "I don't give a damn. I don't give a damn one way or the other."

She watched him cross the bridge to the far railing and lean heavily against it. She rolled the window part way down and called to him once. When he did not respond, she double-checked the hand brake and stepped from the car herself, moving dutifully to the rail beside him. Without otherwise acknowledging her presence, he hunched his shoulders forward and eased a stride away. Confused, yet fearful of antagonizing him further, she waited patiently, gazing out across the rumpled sleeve of water. She watched a yawl track downwind beneath a chalk-scrawl of gulls and terns. "Shall we walk back to the Texaco Station?" she asked.

"This is Currituck Sound," he said curtly, nodding toward the surging water at the base of the abutment and indicating the northward expanse of the strait with a sweep of his hand. "Actually, this point marks the confluence of four different Sounds: Currituck, Albemarle—"

She reached out and gently touched his arm. "Carter, what is it really? What's wrong?"

He looked at her coldly, as if from a great distance. "Currituck, Albemarle, Croatan and Roanoke," he continued. " 'Currituck' comes from the Algonquian, *coratank*, meaning 'wild geese'. In the fall flocks of migratory birds are attracted here by the wild celery and the sago grass." Pausing uncertainly, he blinked in apparent surprise at the monotonous drone of his own voice. "This is the winter range," he went on then with renewed determination. "Some species migrate hundreds, even thousands of miles from the breeding ground. Of course, there are others—some seed eaters, for instance. There was this funny thing with grackles in Rochester or Oswego or someplace—"

He had not withdrawn his arm. Whatever small gain that might represent, she did not intend to jeopardize it now. "How do you know these crazy things?" she asked with a lingering smile, careful to sound neither gullible nor incredulous.

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She had caught him off guard. He shrugged and looked away, staring out across the gray water thoughtfully, as though considering a more elaborate explanation. A flush of ambivalent emotion swept the slate contour of his face, and she sensed he was both pleased with her interest and suspicious of it. "I read a lot," he said then haltingly. "*National Geographic*, *Scientific American*—stuff like that. I—I wanted everything to be right."

He squinted as he spoke, and a muscle along his jaw knotted and twitched. It was an appeal—of that much she was certain. But for what? Understanding? Sympathy? Pity? Without hesitation, she responded in the only way she knew. "Carter —" she whispered, pressing close against him, holding to him tightly. "Carter, I know."

He draped one arm loosely about her. "Do you?" he murmured, weighing the question with troubled eyes. "Do you? I wonder."

She buried her face deep within the folds of his shirt, clung to him more tightly still. She felt him stroke her long hair with gruff fingers, caress her shoulders and her neck. His other hand, she knew, still gripped the railing, supporting them both.

"Carter—"

He stirred slightly, drew a step away. She glanced up cautiously, prepared at once to soothe him, console him—whatever might prove necessary. He was pointing now, mumbling something indistinct, and she turned inquisitively to follow the line of his gaze. It was impressive, all right—she had to admit it: twill-stitched flocks of geese, dark patterned swifts, mallards, pintails, a ragged hem of swallows dragging low across the Sound.

"Look at them," he said in a hushed voice. "Just look at them."

"Yes," she agreed, vaguely annoyed by his reverent intonation. "It really is quite beautiful, isn't it."

"This is what you always read about," he said, standing erect. "The Atlantic Flyway." He smiled wanly. "And now—and now it's more than I imagined even. It makes you feel—I don't know. Funny or something. Small. It makes you wonder."

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In spite of herself she began to stiffen in response. "Isn't there something about heredity or body temperature or something?" she asked pointedly. "I mean theories that explain this kind of thing logically and all?"

He shook his head impatiently. "There must be a hundred different theories," he said. "And you know what? They're full of holes—all of them. That's the beauty of it."

"I remember reading something," she insisted. "Something about heredity. It all seemed very logical."

He ignored her.

She sighed as the weight of the day's events began to chafe and bind her patience. "Why must you romanticize everything?" she demanded suddenly, irritably. "Okay, so the scarlet tanager or whatever takes out for Brazil every year—so what's that, a parable or something?"

He stared at her impassively. "Scarlet tanagers migrate to Peru," he said.

"Now listen, Carter—" She fell silent as the flock spiraled high above them, trailing its own garbled sound track like the tail of a kite, veering upon an invisible crease of wind that bore them obliquely toward the island.

"Sometimes whole flocks are drawn off course by light," he said then. "Airports, Coast Guard beacons, skyscrapers even. There's some talk of blacking out the Empire State during the fall and spring—thirty floors or so, anyway. It came across the wire service about a month ago—the Audubon Society or something. It's becoming quite a problem, you understand. All those dead birds."

"I can imagine."

"The point is," he persisted, "things don't always go according to plan. Sometimes adjustments have to be made. Now you take this thing in Rochester—"

"All right, Carter. I mean, look. This has been a pretty trying day—" Her voice quavered, and she raised her hands and let them fall back to her sides. "So if you're trying to tell me something—" She felt as though she might cry.

"I think it's clear," he said indifferently. "To my mind it's perfectly clear."

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The sky rumbled threateningly. "Come on," she said in a tired voice, tugging his sleeve and starting toward the car.

"What?"

"It's going to rain. Do you intend to stand here in the rain?"

"Yes," he said with a thin smile. "Yes, that's exactly what I intend to do."

"You're the one that talks about adjustments, Carter."

"Yeah. Well, I don't want to talk about it any more."

"Carter, please," she said in exasperation. "Don't be an ass."

"I'm glad you put it that way," he said dryly.

"Oh, go to hell. What makes you think—"

He made a sudden, jerky move toward her, checked himself, began to laugh. "Why don't you just go study your map a while, Vonnie, okay? Maybe you can find a way out of this yourself."

"Listen, Carter. You did this. You're the one."

He turned away silently, peering out across the Sound again, watching the yawl ease around and beat upwind toward an isolated dock.

She rushed at him. "You're the one that did this, I said!"

He reached for a cigarette, struck a match with unsteady hands. "I heard you," he said matter-of-factly. The match flickered in the wind and went out. He lit another.

"You're not worth it, Carter," she lashed out with sudden bitterness. "You never were."

"Don't take it so hard," he smirked. "You can always go home to your mother. Write her a postcard, why don't you?"

The wind slackened noticeably, shifting several degrees to the east. A light drizzle began to fall. She turned and started toward the car.

"Go on—GO ON!" he roared back over his shoulder. "Get the hell away from me!"

She opened the door and slipped behind the wheel, shutting her eyes against the tears until she was safely inside. She turned the key in the ignition and flicked the wipers on. A fine mist began to blow in through the open window.

"Do you think I give a damn?" she heard him bellow. "What makes you think I give a damn anyway!"

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She rolled the window up slowly. He was shouting something else, something she strained to hear and could not make out. The rain was pelting the Rambler now, and the full-force wind swept down the Sound and raked the bridge. All around her, it seemed, interlocking I-beams groaned and taut wire cables shrilled a high-pitched, almost ravening lament. She did her best to ignore it. She pressed her cheek against the window and tried to think of lively, upbeat lyrics: "*Hundred an' one, pounds a fun—Yessir, that's my baby, No sir, I don't mean maybe—Nuthin' could be finer, than to be in—*" Humming dully, woodenly to herself, she watched her breath take form across the cool, flat glass.

*

Coming East from Charleroi, Pennsylvania was not the same as coming East from St. Paul, Minnesota, say, but as a college freshman in 1958, E. Carter Hoit had been inclined to minimize the differences. Admittedly, Rutgers was only one of many state universities he might have attended, but he had spent the whole of the summer before convincing himself the Scarlet Knights would have style if not class. As it turned out he was only partly wrong: what Rutgers had was styles, styles upon styles, and it had taken him the greater part of four years to cultivate them all. False starts. Dead-ends. False starts. That had been the pattern. He had changed his major twice, he had joined a fraternity and resigned within six months, he had been a member of the Outing Club, the Literary Guild, The Student Methodist Movement. In the spring of his junior year he had met a Barnard girl in The Village whose father owned a thirty foot sloop, and the following week he had joined The New Brunswick Sailing Club. A forty-five dollar membership fee plus a ten dollar annual maintenance charge, he was told, entitled him to the use of either the Gannets or the smaller Sprites, a series of twelve private lessons and a paperback sailing manual from which he had memorized one passage (Chapter IV: "Distress") of particular interest:

> Misfortune frequently provides the novice with unique advantages. In fact, no sailor's education

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> is complete until he has capsized (see diagram, p. 82) and experienced that hopeless, helpless moment when a sailboat discards the control of mankind and lays itself down in the water. There is nothing to fear.

The morning of his first lesson Carter cut Dryden, Theories of Personality II and Introduction to Mass Communications. He paced his room for fifty minutes. He left an hour early for the dock and passed the time poring over bay charts, current tables. There were no river charts, he discovered, no posted warnings of locks or dams or hidden bars, nothing, in fact, to indicate a dimension beneath the familiar mirror surface of willow and birch. By the time the instructor arrived Carter sensed a certain fullness had been drained from him and he was bitter.

Adding to his frustration, the first lesson consisted of nothing more than knots: the clove hitch, the half hitch, the sheet bend. The next time out he learned to rig and to trim. It was not until the fifth lesson that he was actually permitted to sail, and even then the instructor, a husky pre-med, had insisted on accompanying him.

With a stiff breeze curling down the Raritan, however, and the Sprite already heeling perilously on a beam reach, Carter realized the moment was within his grasp. "Slack off, Hoit. Slack off!" the instructor had shouted hoarsely, scrambling for the high rail as Carter trimmed the mainsail flat. "Goddamnit, come around! Pinch it, Hoit! You wanna—" It was too late. As the far bank pitched sharply from view and the boom swung down like a frail arm to break the fall, Carter felt a tension seeping from the tiller. He knew they were going over now, and except for one moment when the instructor leapt clear, the Sprite yielded to the wind more gently than he could have imagined. Then he was flung clear himself, thrashing about in the chill, murky water, gasping for breath, struggling, as he believed, for life itself.

They had cut the launch's engine and drifted in behind him silently. Carter barely glimpsed the glossy curved hull before he realized they were hauling him aboard. Too surprised to

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be annoyed or even to assume the guise of gratitude, he stared blankly at the smiling faces. "How's the water, pal?" a ruddy-faced undergraduate asked. He had dark wavy hair cresting high above his forehead, and Carter recognized him as a fellow Student Methodist. His shorter, somewhat stocky companion sneered.

Carter watched the instructor swim around to the side of the launch. "Hey, whasamatter, Ellis?" the stocky one laughed, peering down from the deck. "Little breezy out today?"

"Aw, this screwy sonofabitch," the instructor sputtered, treading water and jerking his head in Carter's direction. "C'mon, gimme a hand willya?"

As they kneeled to pull him up, Carter moved back through the cockpit to the stern. Beyond them he could see the Sprite floating heavily on its side with the sail spread flat across the water like a crippled wing. "Big-ass bird," he had muttered to no one in particular.

Braced against a turning shoulder of the wind, Carter watched the yawl put in across the Sound with a surge of envy. He remembered all too well the disappointment of that day, and he laughed out loud to dispel the effect. The rain was pelting him now, stinging him like hail, and his teeth began to chatter. All his life, it seemed, he had been plagued by reformers, redeemers, knights-errant. He remembered the night he first met Vonnie. *Veronica Rae Detweiler. Wexler Hall. Trenton State Teachers.* It had all been neatly written down by a well-meaning roommate who had scrawled "Can't miss!" beneath her name. That had been in 1961, the year he quit the sailing club, the year he nearly dropped out of college altogether. For reasons he never fully understood ("Can't miss!" occurred to him now) he had felt curiously shabby and inept as he saw her cross the Student Lounge to meet him, and in a moment of panic he had taken refuge in a neglected corner of himself: "Hiya, eh—Veronica. My name's—my name's Carter. Carter Hoit." It had been that easy. And for a while at least, it seemed to make a difference. By the third or fourth date he was confiding things he had never spoken of before, confiding them in a voice as wonderfully new and strange as

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the name was to his ears, and she was listening, nodding sympathetically. Eddie Hoit from Charleroi. Edward Carter Hoit. E. Carter Hoit, a long way from home.

And then there was the chill fall afternoon in Cadwalader Park when they had climbed the jungle-gym and clowned for hours on the swings like kids, and he had struggled to explain why he was out of place at Rutgers. She had interrupted him then, he remembered, gently, a little shyly, but with disarming sincerity: "Carter, listen. You know what I think. I think maybe you're your own worst enemy. I mean—" and she had faltered, fearing perhaps that he was offended. He hadn't been offended though—not at the time anyway—and flattered if anything. But christ, he thought now in a rage, why hadn't he seen the cunning of it then? Why hadn't he realized it would come to this?

Carter swung back from the railing and glared at the Rambler. She had turned the headlights on, and he could see the wipers dragging back and forth across the windshield. He lurched across the bridge and pounded on the window with the flat of his hand. She jerked alert as though roused from a dream. She opened the door. "Baby, you're all soaked," she said, and there was concern in her voice as she reached for his arm to draw him in.

He yanked free. "It's not enough we're outa gas, huh? Now you gotta drain the battery!"

She sank back into the seat and lowered her eyes. "I'm sorry, Carter. Really, I am. I didn't even think—"

"Don't hand me that crap, Vonnie. I know what you're up to. You never had me fooled a minute. You think you're some kind of martyr, right? You think you hang on me long enough I'm gonna feel sorry and change around. Well, lemme tell you something—you've got it all wrong this time, see. Maybe I fell for that stuff once, but no more. Not this time. I'm me—Carter. Eddie Carter Hoit. And that's all I'm gonna be, so fuck it!"

"But don't you see?" She had twisted around and was kneeling on the seat behind the wheel. The rain was blowing in through the open door, and her face was shiny and wet. "Don't

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you see, Carter? This isn't you. You're not this way at all."

"Yes I am." He shuffled his feet and made a half-hearted gesture to close the door. "This is me, all right. This is what I'm like."

She studied his expression a moment and then she forced a laugh. "Hey, you big goof. Come on. Get in this car."

"Naw," he said, still looking troubled. "I want to think this out a minute yet. I—"

He saw the amber beacon first and then he saw the foglights crest above the center arch and coast downhill toward them. The wrecker was painted white with large block letters stenciled on the door: BRIDGE PATROL. The driver gave the siren half a wail and angled in behind the Rambler. The amber beacon flashed and four reflector lights mounted on the fenders blinked sporadically. Carter watched the driver swing down smartly from the cab and stride around behind the truck. He was wearing yellow oilskins, and his face was partly obscured by the drawstring hood. "No parking on the bridge, folks," he drawled.

"Look. This is a private party—" Carter began.

She interrupted him. "Officer, could you help us? We're out of gas."

"I ain't no officer, lady."

"But couldn't you help us though?"

Carter had turned abstractly to watch the gold and crimson light flare out from the truck and glint across the puddles. "Forget it, Vonnie," he shot back over his shoulder. "This guy's nothing."

The driver hitched up his baggy vinyl trousers. "You outa state—that right?"

"Yeah," Carter snapped. "What about it?"

"We got regulations here, mister," the driver said. "I'd hate to turn you in." He glanced toward the truck.

For the first time Carter noticed the slender aerial extending from a coil on the cab and whipping in the wind. A two-way radio. He groaned to himself.

"Please," Vonnie was saying. She had crawled out of the front seat to stand near Carter. "Isn't there something you could do for us?"

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The driver drew the hood snug around his face. "I'm gonna help you all right, lady," he said reflectively. "I'm gonna tow you outa here."

"Oh." She seemed a little stunned at first and she reached for Carter's hand. "That seems like so much trouble," she said. "Couldn't you just drive us back to that Texaco Station?"

"No trouble, lady." He let the hook down with a hand crank and knelt behind the bumper. "My pleasure."

"Now wait a minute. Wait just a damn minute!" Carter crouched down next to him. "How much is this gonna cost, anyway?"

The driver set the hook. "Ten bucks, mister. For you, ten bucks."

"Like hell!" Carter bawled, following him around to the cab. "Like hell it is!"

"You can ride back in the car or you can stay," the driver said mildly. "Whatever suits you best."

They rode back in the car. By the time they filled up at the Texaco Station and started out across the bridge again, the storm had turned-tail and slunk into a lair of gathering darkness. Carter flicked the headlights on. Ten bucks! Ten bucks! he kept thinking. It was humiliating, that's what it was, and he knew she would throw it up to him every chance she got. He considered turning the headlights off again to let her know he wasn't beaten yet, but he realized the bridge would be rough-going in the uncertain light and decided against it.

"How late will they hold the reservations, do you think?" she asked.

It seemed a good time to ignore her. Glancing toward a shore beacon that flashed on the island, he felt a tickle in his nose and began to sniffle.

"Carter, it's getting awfully late, you know."

"Six," he answered quickly. He would have to be careful.

He heard a slight rustle and knew that she had turned to check the dashboard clock. He fought to concentrate on the narrow tunnel of light, but his eyes were drawn down steadily to the dash. Five-thirty.

"Do you think we'll make it?"

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"How the hell should I know?" The shrillness of the outburst surprised him a little. "Anyway, so what if we don't?" he added in a somewhat subdued voice. "There must be plenty more places." He sneezed.

"You caught cold."

There was something accusatory in her tone, he thought, and he didn't like it. Who the hell was she to talk that way to him? This is it, he told himself. This is where I draw the line. "You know what?" he said. "When we get back, I'm going to look around for some different job. Get out of that stinking city for good." He glanced at her warily. "How the hell could you stand growing up in a stinking place like that, anyway?"

She stared straight ahead. "It's not so different from Charleroi," she answered quietly.

He gritted his teeth. What the hell did she know? She had been to Charleroi once to meet his parents, and even then only for a week. "Listen. You only—" he began and then he thought of something else. "We'll never make it by six," he said crossly. "I can tell you that right now. Probably have to stay in some fleabag joint, I guess." He sneezed again.

The manager of THE DIAMOND SHOALS MOTOR INN laughed pleasantly when Vonnie mentioned it. "No ma'am, we'd a held that reservation all night if need be, Miz Hoit. Why hell, this time a year ain't folks enough to make a difference."

Carter grunted softly to himself. For the past ten minutes he had moped about the knotty pine office, listlessly inspecting a varied collection of shells and sea fans and mounted fish while Vonnie chatted with the manager. Eventually he sauntered over to a revolving display rack on the counter and began to leaf through one of the many brochures. He had hoped this would indicate his impatience, but it seemed to have little effect.

"Okay if I take a few of these?" he asked abruptly, selecting a number of the glossy pamphlets at random and waving them at the manager.

"Sure. You go right ahead, Mr. Hoit," the manager smiled. "That's what they're out for." He had a shiny face and he wore contact lenses. Carter had noticed that immediately.

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"How about it, Vonnie?" Carter said then, nodding toward the door.

"Lemme show you up, folks," the manager said, easing from behind the desk. "I got you on the second deck—right out on the water." His movements were ponderous, and he wheezed a little as he spoke. Carter had a difficult time imagining he had spent a life at sea before retiring to the mainland.

"Been here on the Banks all your life?" he asked the manager as they moved outside together and started toward the Rambler.

The manager chuckled and shook his head. "Me and the missus, we come down from Durham two, three years back," he explained. "Mighty lucky too. This here's the up an comin' place." He chuckled contentedly, waiting for Carter to open the trunk.

Carter grimaced. "Oh," he said. "Yeah, I see what you mean." The trunk lid flapped open, and he watched the manager haul out the matching luggage.

Vonnie had gone on ahead and now she hurried back across the gravel parking lot a little breathlessly. "Oh, Carter, you should see it," she exclaimed. "There's a private beach and a fishing pier and—and everything."

"Swell. Fine." He stuffed the pamphlets into his hip pocket.

Smiling proudly, the manager led them through a breezeway to the stairs. "Me and the missus," he remarked, "sometimes we go up ourselves to have a look. Mighty pretty sight, all right. On a good day you can see all these here dark shadows—where them ships went down?"

"Graveyard of the Atlantic, huh?" Carter mused. He had read about it. Twenty-three hundred known wrecks. "Is it true about Nags Head?" he asked. "The way they got the name, I mean?"

The manager had already started up the stairs. The luggage banged and scraped the redwood banister as he climbed, and he halted every fourth step or so to adjust his grip. "Could be," he said breathing heavily. "I wouldn't know about that though, you understand."

Vonnie smiled sympathetically. "Don't let my husband's

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questions bother you," she said. "He's just naturally curious. He reads these things all the time."

The manager shifted his weight uneasily. "Oh, no bother, folks," he assured them. "I like to learn new things myself." He bent clumsily for the bags and started up again.

Carter took a deep breath of the salt air. Vonnie's attitude annoyed him, but he decided to ignore her. Why bother? She probably hadn't meant it like it sounded anyway. Stepping up onto the deck, he paused by the railing and listened to the flat thud of breakers on the beach. As his eyes grew accustomed to the darkness, he glimpsed the low slumping dunes and, beyond them, a crumbling, marble ledge of surf. "Sounds like a rough night," he said aloud, recalling his plans and thinking, maybe, maybe it will work, maybe everything will be all right.

"This time a year, you can never tell," the manager commented soberly, setting the bags down on the deck and fumbling for a key. "Not a cloud in the sky one minute and gale warnings the next. Most folks don't trust it none for vacation," he added, opening the door and flicking on the overhead light.

Vonnie followed him in. "Well, you know how it is with us Yankees," she confided. "Winter migration and all that business. This is a wild goose chase for Mr. Hoit, you might say." She laughed nervously.

The manager was uncertain how to respond. He looked at Vonnie and he looked at Carter. He smiled self-consciously. He shook his head and he clucked his tongue.

Carter was furious. "Very amusing," he snapped. "You're a riot, Vonnie."

She glanced at him and lowered her eyes in confusion.

The manager sensed he was in the middle of something that did not properly concern him, and he lumbered about the room, switching on table lamps, drawing curtains, explaining the operation of a combined heating/air-conditioning unit. Vonnie asked him a number of questions, and he answered, "Yessum, yessum," to them all as he edged toward the door. "Anything you need then—" he concluded lamely and backed out, nodding and grinning.

Carter listened to him shuffle across the deck and down the

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stairs. Then he squared his shoulders and turned to face her. "All right. What's the big idea?"

She lifted the pullman bag onto the bed and opened it. "I'm tired, Carter. Can't we just—"

"No goddamnit! What the hell makes you think—"

"I'm sorry, Carter. Honestly, I am. I know I shouldn't have said that, but I—well, I don't know. It was supposed to be a joke or something, I guess. I didn't think—I just didn't think at all, okay?"

"Big deal. So what am I anyway? The Village Idiot? Some fucking Bozo Clown? Is that it?"

She took a cotton nightgown and a small satin bag from the suitcase. "I'm going to take a shower now," she informed him.

"Wait a minute, Vonnie. No you don't. I—"

She slammed the bathroom door. He heard the lock click as he lurched across the room. "Open this door, Vonnie. You hear me!"

The water spurted on. "I can't hear you, Carter," she shouted above it. "I can't hear you, I can't hear you!"

"You'll be sorry, Vonnie! Just you wait!" He flopped down on the bed next to the suitcase. He shoved it onto the floor. Then he sat up again and replaced the blouses that had tumbled out. The beach sandals. The Kodak Instamatic. He stood up and paced the narrow room. Massaging his forehead with both hands, he watched the wisps of steam curl out beneath the bathroom door and streak the full-length mirror. His head was stuffed, and his sinuses were draining. He reached for a handkerchief and felt the wad of pamphlets in his hip pocket. Glumly, he dumped them into the wastebasket. Then something caught his eye, and he retrieved them. SEE THE WRIGHT BROTHERS NATIONAL MONUMENT. He flipped it aside. VISIT THE LOST COLONY. No. EXPLORE THE INLAND WATERWAY. There it was. "Motor Boats and Sailboats for Hire. Gulf Stream Excursions Arranged. Kitty Hawk Marina." He studied the accompanying map. The marina was on the Sound, but not more than a mile north of Oregon Inlet and open water. He grabbed a pen from a holder on the desk and scribbled down directions on a sheet

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of DIAMOND SHOALS stationery. This was it. He knew he had it this time, and his head throbbed with impatience.

Carter had been in bed for more than twenty minutes by the time she finished in the shower. Stirring and groaning as if asleep, he watched her cross the room through barely slit lids. She had washed her hair and now she sat down at a simulated-walnut vanity to set it. Carter rolled over on his back and shut his eyes. After what seemed like hours he heard the light click off, heard her pad across the room in bare feet. He felt the mattress give as she lay down next to him.

"You awake?" she whispered.

He tensed in spite of himself.

"Come on, baby," she purred, rolling close to him. "I apologize."

She snuggled and moved warmly against him, but he had no intention of yielding now.

"Hey, listen. I want to ask you something."

He turned on his side with his back to her.

"When I was in the shower, I thought about something you were saying. Only you never had a chance to finish." He did not respond, and she went on. "Remember, you were talking about blackbirds or something in Rochester—"

He flopped around to a sitting position. "Don't hand me that," he sputtered. "If you really want to know, find out for yourself." He threw himself back down. "Now get away. I've got important things to think about."

Carter slept fitfully. Once or twice during the night he heard her cry out in a dream, and he buried his head more deeply into the pillow. The last time, he got out of bed and went to the bathroom for a drink. He checked his watch. Four o'clock. He slipped back across the room and outside onto the deck. The wind had fallen off since afternoon, but the air was raw, and he hugged himself for warmth. Leaning against the rail, he listened to the frailer night sounds hover and drift above the thick slur of withdrawing waves: the rustle of sea oats on the hummocks, the chug of a drainage pump, a shrill chirping and twittering high in the dark sky. Night-flyers. He strained to see them, but he could not. He had read somewhere

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about night-flyers without remembering a great deal of it. Usually smaller birds, he recalled, migrating at night to avoid the hawks. He would have to read up on it again. I wonder how the experts figure this, he thought. There was one theory that migrating birds keyed on distinctive topographic features, but that wouldn't work at night. Astronomic orientation? He checked the sky again, but the storm front had blotted out the stars. Sensitivity to the earth's magnetic field? Maybe. But he had a hunch all the wise-guy experts were on the wrong track. Analytic minds! he thought derisively—all those cozy, second-hand theories. What a way to live! What a pathetic—not so fast, he cautioned himself. You pompous ass—are you any different? The question tasted sour in his mouth. Yes. Yes, goddamnit, yes, he insisted stubbornly. But. But what about—forget it. That stuff's in the past. Water over the dam. Tomorrow's another day. Think about tomorrow. Think about—go on, go on. Think about all the tomorrows. Well? Well, maybe I was never cut out for reporting anyway, he decided. News copy! Someday I could be a teacher or a free-lance writer or a forest ranger maybe. Or try this one on for size: E.C. Hoit, Naturalist. A Life in the Field. No more schedules or gauges or maps. No more deadlines. How about that? It would mean back to school again, but what the hell? Why hold back? What was there to lose? Everything was possible, right? Right. He sighed contentedly with the sense that he was on to something big. A discovery. Answers maybe. A Breakthrough.

*

Somewhere beyond the frosted window of her dream she could hear them moving heavy furniture. Thump. There had been small, brightly-colored birds clustered in a sumac thicket and a gentle rain, and the red-tinged leaves had been shiny and clean. Thud. THUMP. The birds were frightened off and she could not lure them back. She opened her eyes to the glare of morning sunlight and squinted at the unfamiliar room. The thumping continued. Suddenly she laughed to herself as the pieces settled into place. The surf, she thought. Of course.

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That's the price you pay for ocean frontage. She wondered if Carter would be interested in her dream, and then she knew clearly he would not.

He was gone. Vonnie checked the bathroom first, and then she ran to the window and flung back the curtains. She scanned the beach once, twice before she saw him slouched against the pilings and nearly hidden in a web of shadow draped beneath the fishing pier. She grabbed her robe from the suitcase and dashed outside. The wind was scudding in briskly from sea, and even before she cupped her hands to shout, she knew he would not hear.

Vonnie clutched her flowered robe more tightly about her as he strolled out along the tide line. She watched him scoop a handful of pebbles from the hard-packed sand and skip them flat across the breakers one at a time. He had turned and started back when he spotted her on the deck and waved. Jogging the remaining distance, he scampered up the dunes and leaped the retaining wall that bordered the motel patio. "Hey! Hiya, beautiful," he called up.

She made a comical face. "Hi yourself," she called back, noticing for the first time what a bright, cloudless morning it was.

He clambered up the stairs. "Man, what a day! I've been up since dawn."

He was bouncing around next to her, shadow boxing and running in place in a parody of fitness. She laughed brightly as he dropped into pushup position and collapsed flat on the deck with a heavy groan.

"Nine, ten, you're out," she said.

He hopped to his feet. Moving toward her in an exaggerated crouch, he caught her around the waist and lifted her off the deck.

"Carter, put me down, you jerk!" She laughed and squirmed and kicked her feet.

"Nope. 'To the Victor,' you know." He draped her over his shoulder and started for the room. "Ladies and gents. The WinNAH and New Cham-PEEN—Carter 'The Kid' Hoit!" He turned the knob with one hand and nudged the door. "Be-

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sides," he added mysteriously, "I've got a little surprise for you today."

Vonnie took the cue. She combed her hair and finished dressing quickly. She asked eager questions and pouted when he smiled evasively or whispered obscure hints. Content to wait, she knew he delighted in her show of impatience. They had breakfast in a nearby diner that displayed a sun-bleached whale bone on the wall behind the counter and a ship's wheel chandelier. Watching their eggs sizzle on a corner of the grill, they twirled on the low stools and flipped idly through the Wurlitzer selections. Carter dropped in a quarter and played "Jamaica Farewell." She played "Moonglow" and "Funny Girl." Then they crossed to the front windows and stared out at the ocean. "Hey, look," she said, pointing at a grove of low trees beside a shingled cottage. "Oranges. Oranges, way up here."

"That's the Gulf Stream does that," he informed her. "C'mere a minute. I'll show you." They sat down again at the counter, and he sketched a rough outline of the Atlantic Coast on a paper napkin. "See? The Banks jut out like this. And the Gulf Stream curves up around—like this."

The waitress brought their eggs and toast and coffee.

"I'm not sure I get it, Carter," Vonnie confessed.

"Well, it affects the climate. Like in England? That's why the fishing is so good here too."

Vonnie began to nibble her toast, but Carter went on talking. "Sometimes it swings within a few miles of the coast and you can see it from the beach. It's always out there though, even when you can't see it."

"Sounds interesting." She cut into her eggs.

"And beautiful too. All turquoise and clear. Like some river no one ever found before. Like another world."

"Maybe we'll see it. Maybe it will swing in like you say."

Carter smiled and lowered his eyes. "Yeah, maybe."

Something about his manner troubled her. She glanced sidelong at him. "Carter—"

He took a quick swallow of coffee. "Hey, you know what? I'm not hungry, after all. You about finished?"

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She nodded silently and pushed the eggs away. He called for the check. There was a stamp machine on one end of the counter near the cash register, and she was suddenly reminded of the postcards. She had promised Carter's mother a card, but that would have to wait. As far as she could tell, he had never gotten on with his parents, and it seemed a foolish thing to mention now.

Carter paid the waitress and left a tip. On the way out he stopped near a showcase filled with straw hats and tanning lotions and various beach accessories. He tapped the glass. "You could stand a new pair of sunglasses," he said off-handedly.

She steeled herself. "That's crazy, Carter. Mine are okay."

"I dunno," he mused. "They don't seem to fit you right or something. They keep slipping down all the time."

She could feel a flutter in her throat, but she managed to appear carefree and pat him lightly on the cheek. "You're sweet," she assured him, "but I just don't need them now, okay?"

"Okay, okay," he grinned, holding the door for her. "Don't say I didn't warn you though."

She began to breathe more easily. "So where to?" she asked, stepping outside and walking beside him to the Rambler.

"Just wait. You'll see." His eyes were very bright.

They pulled out of the parking lot and turned left on U.S. Route 158, heading south. They cruised past the motel. "Come on, tell me," she prompted.

"Be patient." He smiled and began to whistle softly. Then he assumed a more sober expression, cleared his throat and sang out:

O, Danny Boy, the pipes, the pipes are ca-all-in',
From glen to glen, and down the mountainside—

He glanced at her and nodded.

"The summer's gone—" she joined in, slightly off-key,
and all the roses fa-all-in',
It's you, it's you must go, and I must bide.

They sang all the verses in a ragged, uneasy harmony. She let him handle the chorus by himself, and as he offered up the final notes, she slid over close to him and leaned her head against his shoulder. He put his arm around her awkwardly.

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They drove on in silence for several minutes. Then just past the Nags Head town limits he swung sharply off the road and brought the Rambler to a halt. He took a crumpled sheet of paper from his pocket and studied it, obviously perplexed.

"What's the matter?"

"Nothing. It's all right." He backed the Rambler around and started north again. "There it is," he said tersely as they neared a narrow cutoff road leading toward the Sound. "I just missed the turn, is all."

The road was full of potholes, and they bounced and splashed along for nearly half a mile before the pavement trailed off into sandy, deep-gashed ruts. As they swung down near the Sound, she caught sight of a jetty and four bowed docks extending from it like the tines of a fork. There were Esso pumps and a corrugated iron shed with a hand-painted sign attached to the roof: KITTY HAWK MARINA. A single ketch moored in the nearby cove and a number of smaller boats covered with tarps and slung in cradles well back from the water added to the general air of desolation.

"Well, here we are," he said as they pulled up near the jetty.

"Uh-huh."

"Surprised?"

"About what?"

He laughed. "What a character." He patted her knee. "We're gonna rent a sailboat, that's what."

It seemed as if she had known it all along and was only now admitting it to herself. "Carter, you don't know how to sail," she said, moving her knee away.

"Sure I do. I used to take lessons, you know." He opened the door and stepped out. "C'mon."

"It doesn't look like anyone's here. Maybe we should go."

He stared at her woodenly. "You coming or not, Vonnie,"

She lowered her eyes.

"Well?"

She nodded.

"Come on then." He held the door for her.

She grabbed the wicker bag from the seat and slipped out behind the wheel. The jetty was constructed of slab rock and

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overlaid with unpainted duckboard. There was no railing, and she reached for his arm. He took her by the hand. "You'll see. This is gonna be great." He smiled encouragement, but she did not respond.

As they approached the shed, a man appeared in the open doorway. "Folks," he addressed them, nodding his bald head. He was deeply tanned and his face was pitted and creased like a walnut.

"Hiya," Carter said. "Like to see about a sailboat."

The attendant nodded without comment and retreated briefly into the shed. He appeared again with a frayed black notebook. "Three dollar an hour," he said indifferently. "Ten dollar deposit and a driver's license for security."

"Fine," Carter agreed. "Sounds good."

The attendant nodded again and sauntered down a ramp toward the dock.

"Carter?" Vonnie whispered, squeezing his hand.

"What?"

"That's awfully expensive, don't you think?"

He set his jaw. "Don't pull this on me, Vonnie," he warned hoarsely.

"But, Carter. I just thought—" He started down the ramp, and she hurried after him. The attendant was waiting, jotting something in his notebook. Beyond the Esso pumps she noticed five plywood dinghies tied up at the pilings and rocking gently in the slated shade beside the dock. Three of them were fitted with rudders and short aluminum masts.

Carter ambled over. "Lateen rigged, huh?"

"Uh-huh," the attendant acknowledged, glancing at his watch and recording the time.

Carter slipped two fives out of his wallet along with his driver's license and handed them over. Then he crouched on the dock above a red dinghy and stepped down cautiously, lowering himself into the stern seat. "C'mon," he urged, extending his hand to her. "Anchors aweigh."

"Carter, are you sure—"

"Sure, sure." He winked self-consciously at the attendant. "Wife's never done too much sailing," he explained.

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"That's all right," the attendant said. "Ain't none too rough today."

Vonnie smiled meekly, wanting suddenly to share the easy self-assurance of these two men. Clutching the wicker bag as the attendant took her arm and helped her down, she stumbled on the narrow splashboard and nearly tipped the boat. Carter looked away. The attendant cleared his throat. "That's all right, ma'am," he nodded stiffly. But was it? She couldn't be sure. Carter was obviously annoyed. Or embarrassed. Or maybe just impatient to get started. She sat down distractedly on the forward seat, overwhelmed with self-doubt, uncertainty—a sense of trying-oh-so-hard-to-please incompetence. Why did Carter even bother with her? When had she been anything but a burden? What was it he had said? 'You think you hang on me long enough, I'll change around.' And wasn't that right, after all? Wasn't that what she was doing in spite of herself? She looked around her at the unfamiliar gear, feeling all the more inept. How could she have been so indifferent to his interests? So, so—what? Selfish? Something told her that was not precise, but she was grateful for the swift bludgeoning effect of the word just the same. Yes. Selfish. That was it, all right. "Will you teach me, Carter?" she blurted unexpectedly. "I—"

"Just sit still there," he barked. "And watch out for your head when I hoist this sail."

The attendant had untied the painter and tossed it onto the deck. "Stay clear of the inlet," he called to Carter as he pushed them off. "Tide goes out in half an hour."

"Okay. Sure," Carter said. He eased forward to haul a line running up through a pulley on the mast and down again to the spar. The spar was hinged to the boom and fitted lower on the mast with a double prong. As the spar climbed and spread the hinge, the dacron sail unfurled. When the boom was high enough for ample clearance, he secured the line on a cleat and moved back to the tiller.

"Tell me what you did just now," she said earnestly. "I want—"

"Look. I told you once already I took lessons. If you don't trust me, that's too damn bad."

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"No, I—that's not—"

"You want to go back?"

"No."

"Then shut up then."

She turned glumly in the seat as he swung the tiller and caught a gust of wind in the sail. The dinghy shuddered. It gouged and furrowed the low swells like a plow. She hung one hand over the side and dipped it into the brackish water. It was very cold.

"Not a bad little boat," Carter mused, trimming the sail and angling downwind.

She glanced over her shoulder. "Oh, I think it's very nice," she agreed. He ignored her, and she looked away. The morning sun was glinting sharply off the water, and in the distance the Sound stretched flat beneath a bright metallic fleece. She reached for her sunglasses in the wicker bag, thought better of it and shielded her eyes with both hands.

Cutting back across the wind, Carter suddenly veered in toward a salt-marsh smudge along the shore. For the first time she noticed the narrow inlet less than half a mile to the south and the spray-flecked swatch of open water beyond it. "Carter!" she started in alarm. "That man said—"

"Sssh!" He was coming around now, spilling wind and nosing sluggishly in among the cattails and the matted reeds.

"But that man said—"

"Shut up, Vonnie!" As he pinched in close on the wind, the sail luffed, slapping loudly. The snowy egret exploded from the dark-tangle rushes with a guttural, almost mocking croak. It rose above them swiftly, fleeing down the Sound on strong beating wings.

"Now look what you did," he fumed.

"That's not fair, Carter. I didn't even see it there."

"That proves it."

"It doesn't prove a thing. Besides, you're the one that frightened it off."

"That was a snowy egret. A snowy egret! How many times have you ever seen a snowy egret before?"

"Well, I've seen one now."

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" 'Well, I've seen one now,'" he mimicked her.

She hung her head. An oily film was sloshing back and forth beneath the duckboard flooring, and she raised her feet up on the centerboard trunk.

"You ruin everything," he complained bitterly, working the dinghy around on the wind. "You ruined this whole vacation. You ruined my whole life. You and your trashy city and your dumb, scared parents."

She stared at the glossy water. "I have a headache, Carter," she said quietly.

"Tough."

She watched the sail puff out beside her. She reached for the wicker bag and set it on her lap. "Will you take me back to the dock now, please?"

"Gladly."

He tracked back across a steady wind, beating in toward shore as they neared the dock. Vonnie took out her sunglasses and slipped them on, wagging and nodding her head until they slid down the bridge of her nose. She hoped he would notice. She hoped he would say something, anything, and if he did, if he said, *I told you those glasses didn't fit* or *I told you to get another pair*, she would slap him right across the face.

He didn't notice. He was absorbed with the upwind approach, with dropping the sail, with nudging the smooth-worn pilings and holding the dinghy close as she climbed out on the dock. He was preoccupied. He didn't seem to understand at all.

Vonnie noticed the attendant watching them from the doorway of the shed. She forced a smile. She shook her head once in the breeze and smoothed her hair.

"Don't bother to wait around for me," Carter said brusquely, tugging on the main sheet and wrapping it around his hand.

"I'll go back to the motel," she said. "You can phone me if you want a ride."

"Don't hold your breath."

She adjusted her sunglasses casually. "You're such a child, Carter."

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"The keys are in the car."

"How will I know if anything happens?" She said it smoothly, without a trace of emotion.

"Don't worry about me. I can take care of myself."

"Oh, I'm not worried, Carter. Just morbid curiosity, is all." She was pleased to see him pale slightly.

"Big-deal. So I guess that's supposed to break me up or something, huh?" He jammed the tiller hard against the curved edge of the cockpit.

"Oh, Carter, you're such a frightened little boy." She smiled. "I hope you find it, Carter—whatever it is you're looking for. I really hope you do." She turned abruptly and started up the ramp, determined not to stop until he raised the sail and drifted out again. Inching across the jetty, she quickened her pace as she neared the Rambler. She went straight to the driver's side and peered in through the window. The keys were in the ignition. She bit her lip. Then she turned reluctantly, a little fearfully perhaps, and scanned the Sound. She spotted the sail midway between the marina and the marsh, just as she expected. He was headed for the inlet.

The sloughy, jolting, reckless drive back to the highway seemed less a physical discomfort than some muddled premonition. She hit U.S. Route 158 at forty miles an hour and nearly spun out on the gravel apron. By the time she reached the motel she had managed to calm herself considerably. She knew there would be a wait, half an hour at least, and when the manager called to her from the parking lot, she stopped to exchange pleasantries.

"Now, Miz Hoit—you be sure and tell your husband I been asking around," the manager said. He stood near a stack of heavy wooden shutters, toying with a claw hammer.

"I'm sure Mr. Hoit will appreciate it," Vonnie said. She noticed a number of windows along the north wing were already boarded over for the winter.

"The way I get the story," the manager continued, "folks around here used to tie a lantern on a horse and lead him down along the beach at night." He paused for effect. "Now a ship, not knowing any different, would think this was another ship

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in the channel. Run right up on the reef. The way I get it, folks around here made a livin' on the salvage alone."

Vonnie glanced at her watch.

"Course, that's just a story. You know how stories get around."

"Of course."

"Nags Head," the manager mumbled speculatively. "Sure is a funny name though. I thought Mr. Hoit would like—"

"I'll be sure and tell him," Vonnie said. She left the manager looking a little bewildered as she broke for the stairs. Crossing the deck, she noticed a linen cart outside the door and hesitated a moment before going in. The bed had not been touched and the maid was nowhere in sight. If she thought it would do any good to complain—but it never did, she told herself. When had it ever accomplished anything? She closed the door and moved across to the balustrade, resting her hands lightly on the rail. There was nothing to do but wait. She gazed out at the fishing pier. Terns and herring gulls were circling above it, diving headlong into the surf for small fish and scraps of bait. The water was uniformly gray and sloped toward the beach in long, regular swells. At least it seemed that way at first. After a while she began to perceive a greater complexity of motion and hue: a certain steel-blue luster, a surge of drab green, a plum-dark bruise lodged out beyond the first line breakers. A sunken freighter, she realized. Or a schooner maybe. So it was just as Carter said after all. Her eyes swept the blurred expanse of water to the south. There was nothing to do. She turned and began to pace the length of the deck, counting softly to herself. Three-four-five. She could hear the manager nailing up the shutters. Fourteen-fifteen. If she listened closely, she could make out the thin, diving screech of the terns. Twenty-seven. Twenty-eight. The motel was considerably longer than she anticipated. Fifteen units along the sea-deck, and she didn't know how many more on the north terrace. One hundred and eight paces. When she reached the outside staircase, she took a deep breath and pivoted expectantly. Nothing. She paced back again, arriving at a different count, and up and back a second time before she saw it—a

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white sail hung against the sky like a tapered, plunging wing. She started up the deck again, counting more deliberately. One hundred and eleven paces! How could she have been so wrong?

Despite the promise of the sail, he was making little progress. Several minutes passed before she glimpsed the red-curve hull, and even then, he was nothing but a vague lumpy shape in the stern. She guessed what he was up to though. She had seen the angle of the sail yaw slightly—or the angle of the sun reflected off the sail—and then she saw him set another course, veering even closer to the beach. Her first impulse was to try and warn him somehow. Then she realized it would do no good, that he meant to have it this way, that he meant for her to watch.

Vonnie descended from the deck in a kind of stupor. She left the wicker bag behind. By the time she trudged across the dunes and reached the kelp-strewn tide line, the dinghy was nearly abreast and not more than eighty yards beyond the heavy surf. She could see him clearly now, sitting tall (and quite proud, she supposed) beneath the sail, staring straight ahead with that sober, this-young-man-is-destined look she remembered from his high school year book. He would not turn to look at her of course, but he seemed to know when she had viewed him long enough. He swung the tiller hard and aimed the dinghy out to sea.

She didn't have to watch. She knew he wouldn't make it.

He hovered there for quite some time, attempting various maneuvers to break the give-a-little, take-a-little, push and tug rhythm, but there really was no contest. Eventually the shaggy-hump swells would drive him in on the beach where the dinghy would nose up the last crest and tumble down. It was just that simple. She knew it, and he seemed to know it too. A panicky look clouded his features, and she wanted to turn away.

She didn't though. She stuck it out. She watched him drop the sail, pull up the centerboard, grip the gunwales determinedly. She saw the dinghy mounting, turning meekly broadside on the crest, saw it dangle there above the rumbling summer lightning of the wave.

Carter was all arms and legs and one white sneaker that

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seemed to bounce without him as he disappeared. There was nothing to do. She knew he might still bob to the surface or be swept spraddle-legged across the sand, but there was nothing she could do.

He surfaced twenty yards from her, and she waded out into the icy water. He swam in slowly, apparently uninjured but dazed. She watched him crawl unsteadily to his feet, saw another wave rise up and flatten him.

She drifted out a little further and grabbed his arm. He was badly bruised and raw with abrasions. "Christ," he sputtered. "That was awful. For a minute there—"

"Come on," she said. They waded out together. She noticed he was limping and something scraped inside her. "Your leg?" she asked.

He sank down heavily on the sand and held up his left foot. "My shoe," he said.

Vonnie remained standing. There was nothing to do now that he was safe.

He looked up and smiled a little. "What happened to the boat?"

She pointed. Jagged red pieces of board were floating on the water and the mast was bent double like a bobby pin. The sail was gone.

He folded his arms across his updrawn knees and sat quietly for several minutes. Then he stood up and took a few steps toward a part of the rudder that had washed ashore. "It's a wreck," he said in a flat voice. "See? I tried, but— I tried and this is what I did."

He was beaten. She could see that, and in a searing way it both pleased and saddened her. "You should have known," she said. "You tried too hard."

He turned to face her, but his eyes were closed. He raised his hands and let them fall back to his sides. He nodded dumbly.

Maybe we all do though, she thought then. Maybe he deserves to hear that too. Maybe someday. She wanted to believe that someday she would tell him. She wanted to believe that almost more than anything. Someday when she was ready. "Well," she said, turning away. "I guess that's that."

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bertholo

SEVEN "SMALL-SCALE MODELS"

DRAWINGS AND EXPLANATIONS

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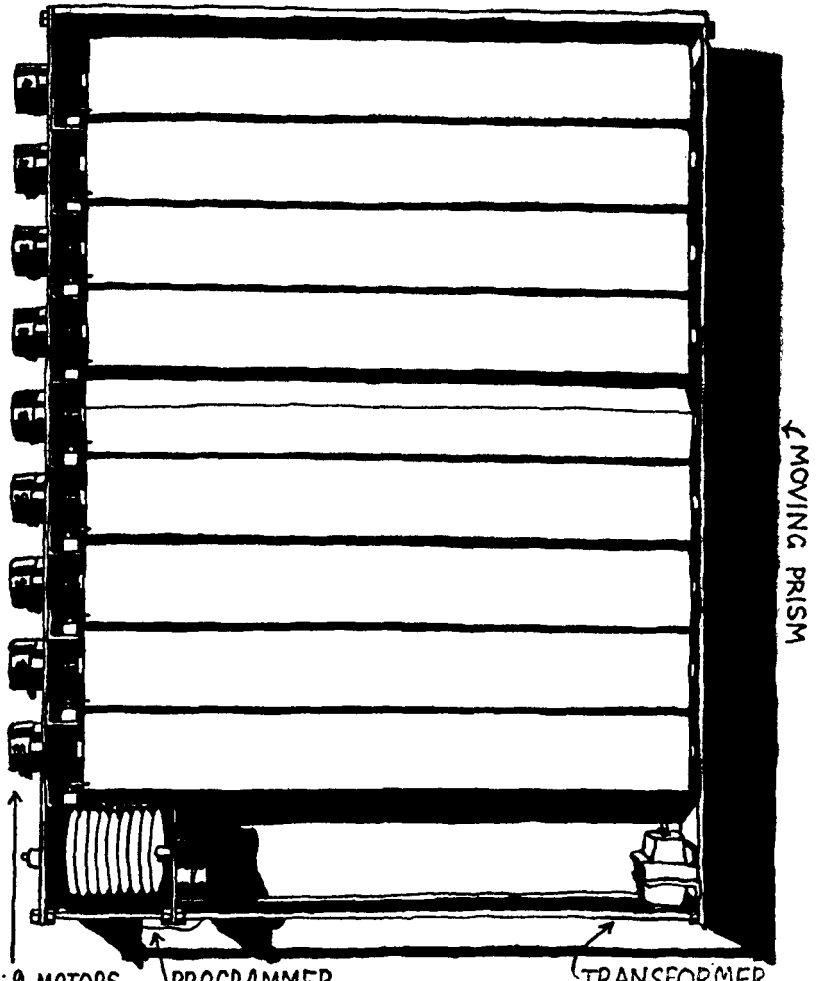
"THREE ASPECTS OF THE SKY" 1968 36X27X5 INCHES



THE OBJECT CONSISTS OF 9 TRIANGULAR ALUMINUM PRISMS, WHOSE SIDES ARE PAINTED TO REPRESENT DAY, SUNSET, AND NIGHT. THE COLOR OF EACH SIDE IS GRADUATED - IN THE CASE OF THE SUNSET, FROM RED THROUGH ORANGE, YELLOW, AND GREEN TO BLUE. THE PRISMS ROTATE ONE AT A TIME IN SEQUENCE: IT TAKES 30 SECONDS FOR THE ENTIRE SKY TO CHANGE COLOR.

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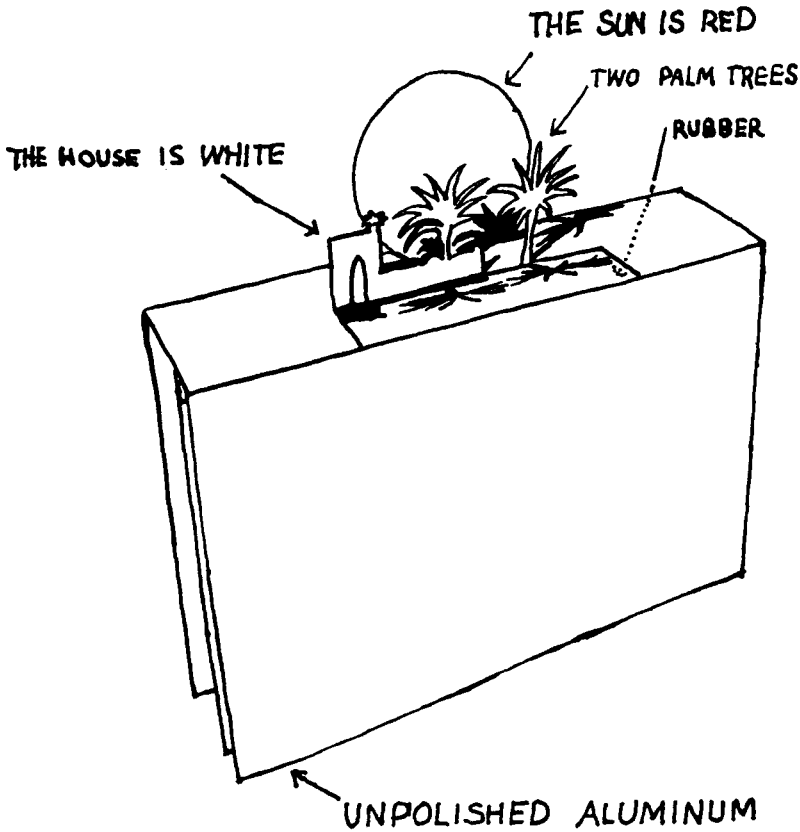
"SUNSET" 1967
26X25X6.5 INCHES

WHEN THE SUN SETS, THE SHADOWS PAINTED ON THE RUBBER STRIP LENGTHEN AS THE STRIP STRETCHES



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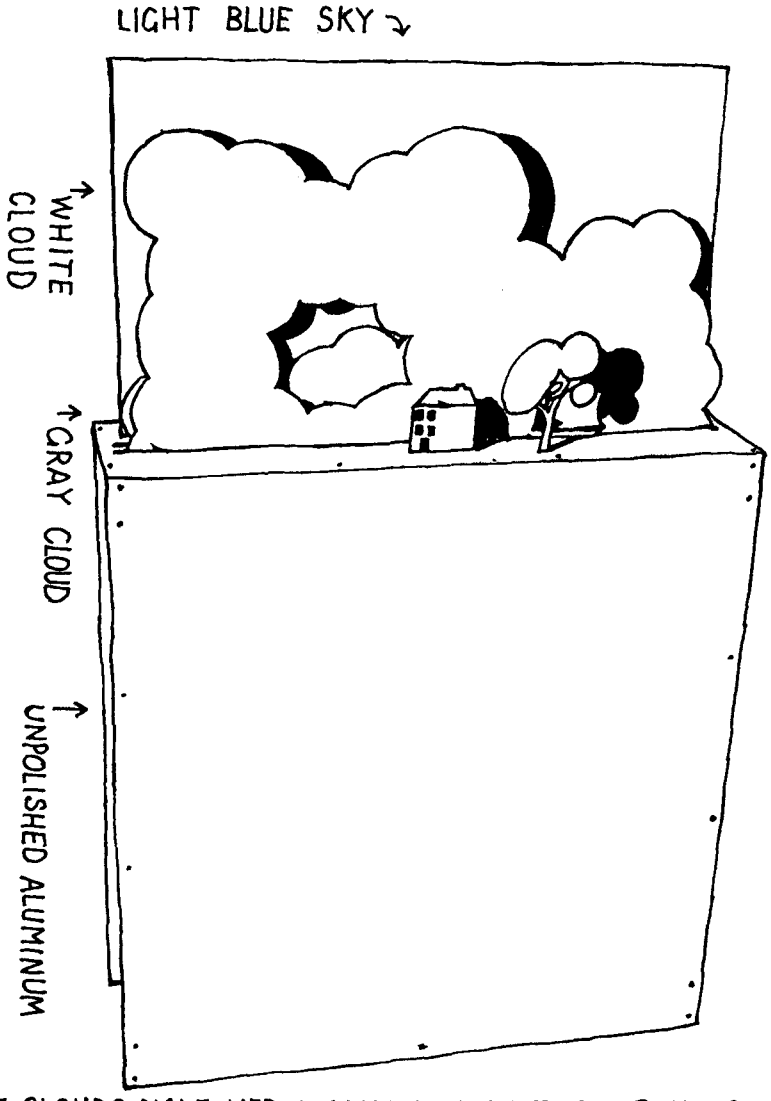
"CLOUDS" 1967 40X26X7 INCHES



THE CLOUDS MOVE VERTICALLY AT A SPEED OF ABOUT 9 INCHES A MINUTE. A PROGRAMMER VARIES THE POINT AT WHICH THEY CHANGE DIRECTION. THE PROGRAM LASTS 10 MINUTES.

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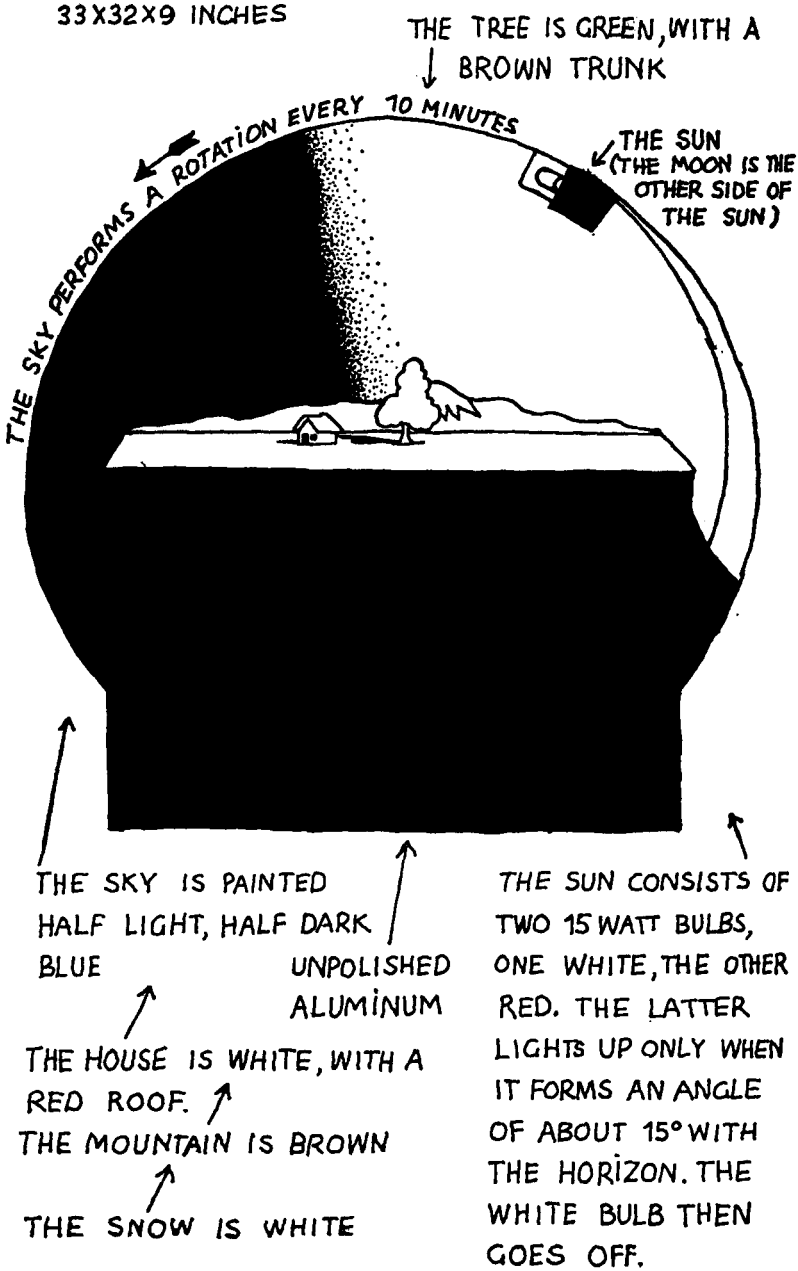
"NIGHT AND DAY" 1966
33X32X9 INCHES


THE TREE IS GREEN, WITH A BROWN TRUNK
THE SKY PERFORMS A ROTATION EVERY 10 MINUTES
THE SUN (THE MOON IS THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SUN)
THE SKY IS PAINTED HALF LIGHT, HALF DARK BLUE
UNPOLISHED ALUMINUM
THE HOUSE IS WHITE, WITH A RED ROOF.
THE MOUNTAIN IS BROWN
THE SNOW IS WHITE
THE SUN CONSISTS OF TWO 15 WATT BULBS, ONE WHITE, THE OTHER RED. THE LATTER LIGHTS UP ONLY WHEN IT FORMS AN ANGLE OF ABOUT 15° WITH THE HORIZON. THE WHITE BULB THEN GOES OFF.

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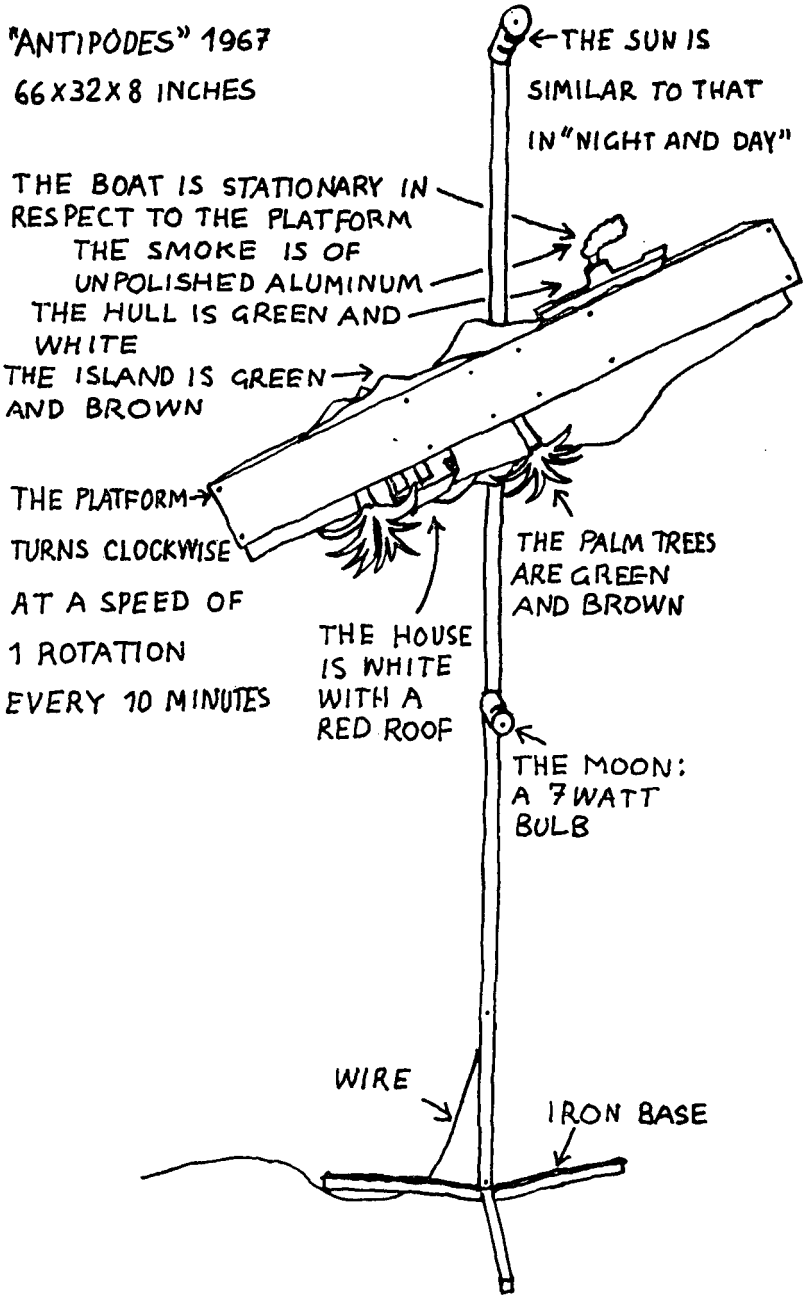
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"ANTIPODES" 1967

66 x 32 x 8 INCHES


THE SUN IS SIMILAR TO THAT IN "NIGHT AND DAY"
THE BOAT IS STATIONARY IN RESPECT TO THE PLATFORM
THE SMOKE IS OF UNPOLISHED ALUMINUM
THE HULL IS GREEN AND WHITE
THE ISLAND IS GREEN AND BROWN
THE PLATFORM TURNS CLOCKWISE AT A SPEED OF 1 ROTATION EVERY 10 MINUTES
THE HOUSE IS WHITE WITH A RED ROOF
THE PALM TREES ARE GREEN AND BROWN
THE MOON: A 7 WATT BULB
WIRE
IRON BASE

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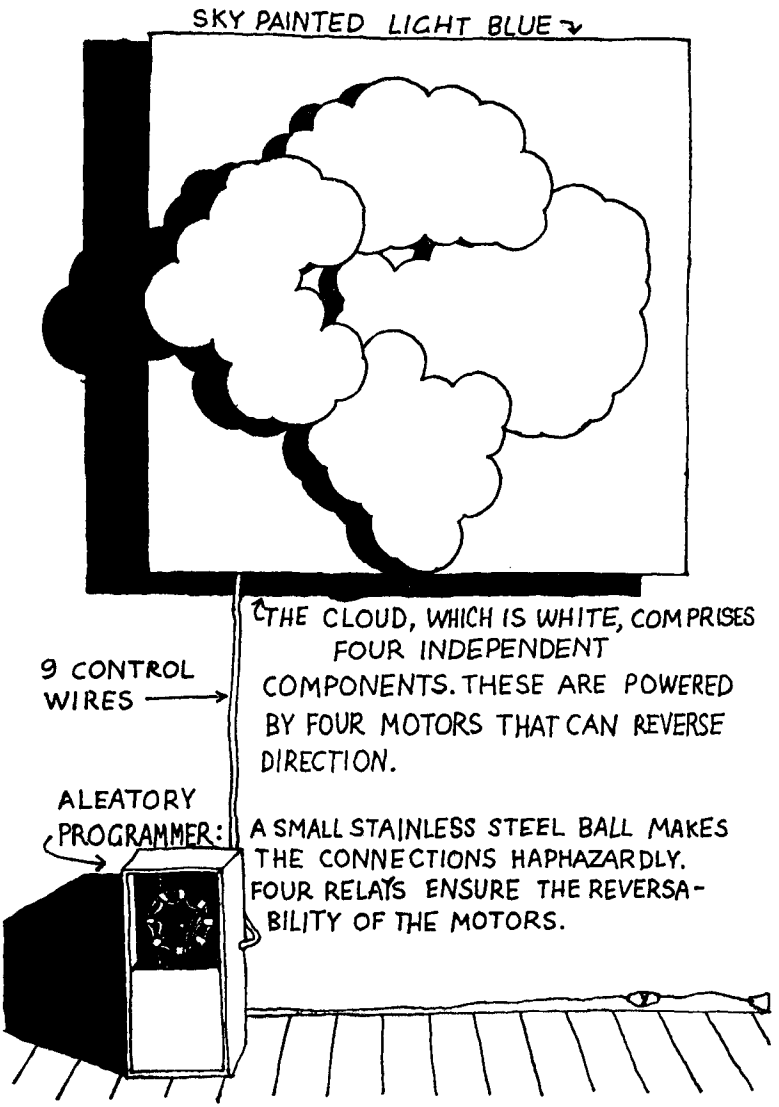
"CLOUD WITH VARYING SURFACE-AREA" 1968
40X40X7 INCHES


SKY PAINTED LIGHT BLUE
THE CLOUD, WHICH IS WHITE, COMPRISES FOUR INDEPENDENT COMPONENTS. THESE ARE POWERED BY FOUR MOTORS THAT CAN REVERSE DIRECTION.
9 CONTROL WIRES
ALEATORY PROGRAMMER:
A SMALL STAINLESS STEEL BALL MAKES THE CONNECTIONS HAPHAZARDLY. FOUR RELAYS ENSURE THE REVERSABILITY OF THE MOTORS.

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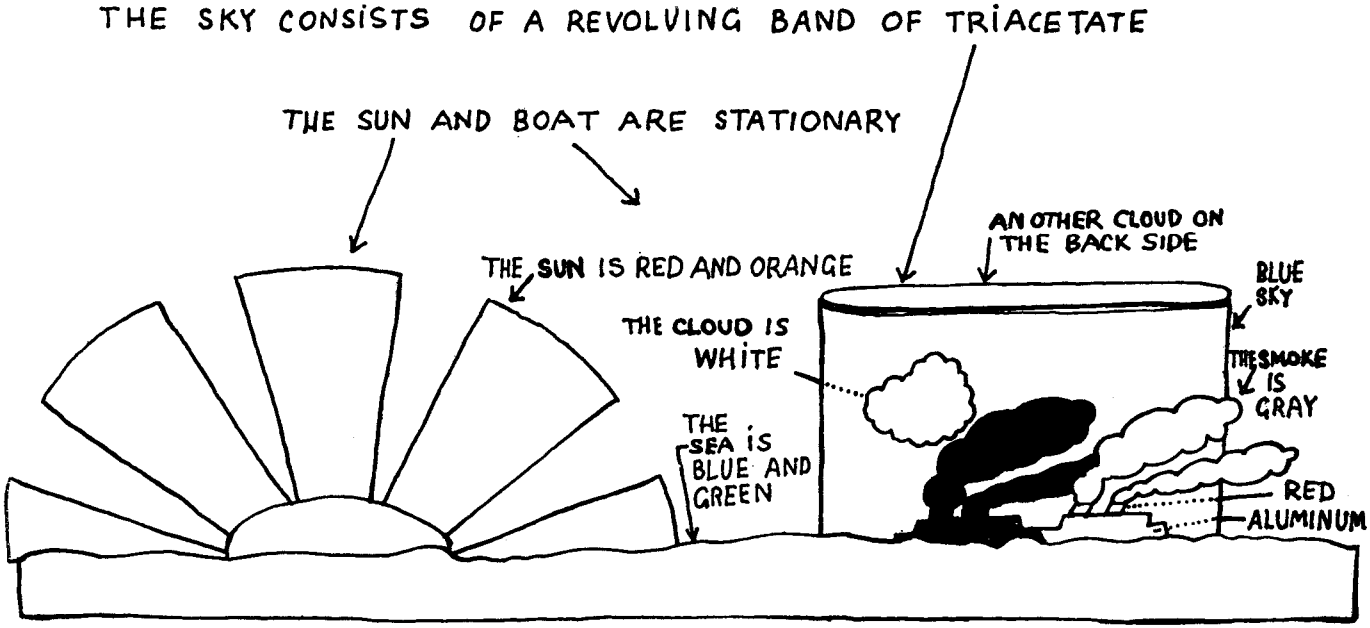
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"FAIR AND UNCHANGING" 1966
40X10X5 INCHES


THE SKY CONSISTS OF A REVOLVING BAND OF TRIACETATE
THE SUN AND BOAT ARE STATIONARY
THE SUN IS RED AND ORANGE
AN OTHER CLOUD ON THE BACK SIDE
BLUE SKY
THE CLOUD IS WHITE
THE SMOKE IS GRAY
THE SEA IS BLUE AND GREEN
RED ALUMINUM

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The woman was involved with how she looked.
The man was busy writing.

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Lewis MacAdams

Lady Sick In Her Lung

Fast fella, cough it up, five cents more please.
Faster, this crap'll kill you, like anything else
as you cruise toward the bridge,
towards national death come due this minute we been evicted
come December 1st the ocean's going down on the sun.

Hey wait a minute, that's backwards, this old lady
bumming me for a quarter, retching phlegm. One quarter?
Is that your cut? Her lost sailor-man cut corners
to give himself his best, free to sail at sea,
free to dock to the arms of childrens, and a wife for life.

Shattered lung, bodies float up Mission at two speeds:
lost and erasure. Wary. Traitor, martyr unfair?
Unfair. Just an old lady stooped to her load,
asks can you give her some dough,
someone who will soon go aloft, coughing,
keeping watch now along 2nd street, watching the cough drop
behind tankers, anchors settled and the sun rolling in the sun-
set.

Nowhere to lie by nights, life racing past her, coughing
old broad spread in the doorway
grips her black coat to her lungs, pockets your change
and blacks out the su

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We Keep On Breathing

Black snake moan and moan
The Holy see. The light wraps around me like a chain.
See that it gets around.

He is very sorrowed that all this happened.
He works for his brothers.
"No gangsters! The friendlies
is what we obliterate." Shadows
commence to convene at your borders, start
shoving in close.

Various maxims: Truth is what won't pass.

Would you really renounce it
just to linger?
The family worked overtime,
Jewish for *you*.
Another order.
Take it easy. More easy bread.
But order's for the big boys,
long since overthrown.

I understand the warning—
man taking notes in the door.

Be glad to clear it,
if you can just be more helpful...

To outlive time, live through it,
faster than ever before.

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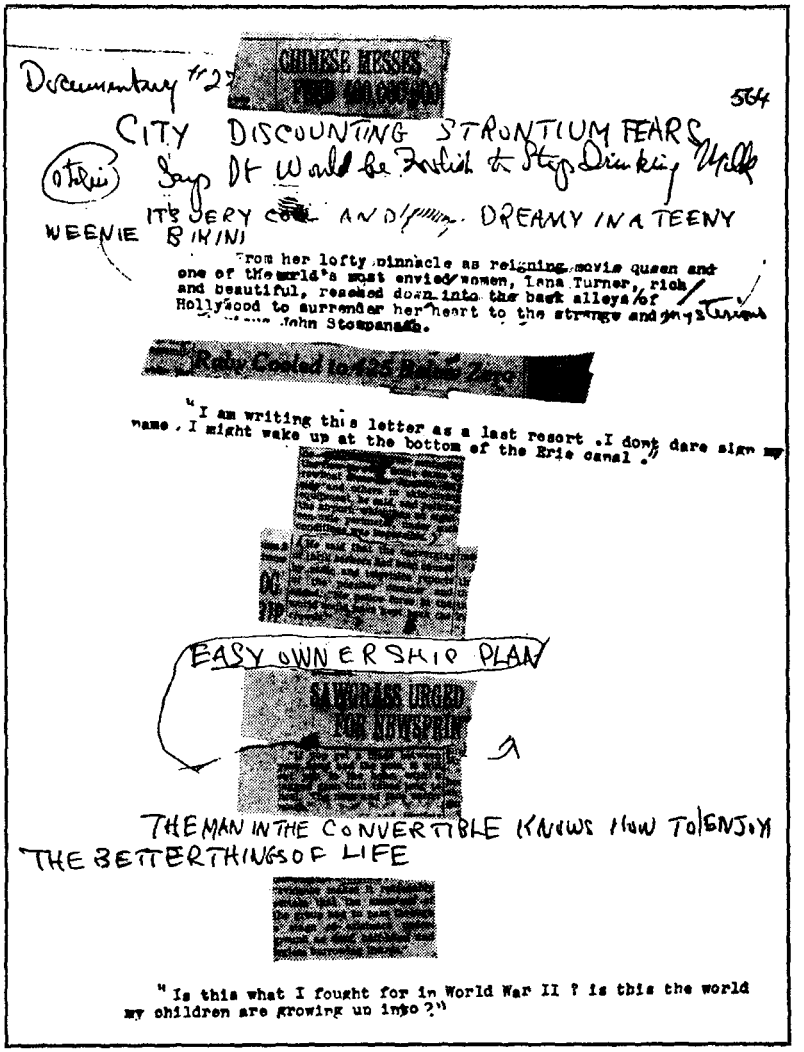
Documentary #27
CHINESE RESSES
564
CITY DISCOUNTING STRONTIUM FEARS
Stop It Would be Foolish to Stop Drinking Milk
IT'S VERY COOL AND DREAMY IN A TEENY WEENIE BIKINI
from her lofty pinnacle as reigning movie queen and one of the world's most envied women, Lana Turner, rich and beautiful, resolved down into the back alleys of Hollywood to surrender her heart to the strange and
John Stompanato.
"I am writing this letter as a last resort .I dowt dare sign my name . I might wake up at the bottom of the Erie canal ."
EASY OWNERSHIP PLAN
SAWDUST URGED FOR NEWSPRINT
THE MAN IN THE CONVERTIBLE KNEWS HOW TO ENJOY THE BETTER THINGS OF LIFE
" Is this what I fought for in World War II ? is this the world my children are growing up into ?"

Manuscript page of *Midcentury*

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The Art of Fiction XLIV

John Dos Passos

Shortly after John Dos Passos had completed U.S.A. *in 1936, Jean-Paul Sartre observed that he was "the greatest living writer." In 1939, a* New Masses *reviewer attacked his novel,* Adventures of a Young Man, *as "Trotskyist agitprop." Neither statement set a pattern for later estimates of Dos Passos, although they suggested the extremes with which his earlier novels* (Three Soldiers, Manhattan Transfer, *and* U.S.A.*) and then his later ones (*District of Columbia, Midcentury*) have been accepted. Dos Passos has also run to extremes in his experiences: from the* New Masses *to the*

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National Review, *from the Norton-Harjes Ambulance Service to an assignment for* Life *in the Pacific Theater, from Versailles to Nuremberg, from incessant travel to the quiet of his grandfather's farm.*

Despite all these contradictions and despite even the autobiographical thread in his work, he has been a writer of unusual detachment. He is still asked, as he was in the twenties: "are you for us or against us?" He has also been unusually industrious, having published eighteen books since U.S.A. *He works too hard and too steadily to spare much time for answering questions about himself.*

Dos Passos was interviewed on his farm, Spence's Point, on the Northern Neck of Viriginia, a sandy, piney strip of land between the Rappahannock and the Potomac. The state highway in from U. S. 301 passes turnoffs to the birthplaces of Washington and Monroe. The windy, overcast June day didn't hold enough threat of a storm to keep the writer, his strikingly handsome wife, and the interviewer from swimming in the Potomac before proceeding to anything else. He spoke easily about what he was doing currently or was soon about to do, but turned talk away from what he had done years before by short, muffled answers, a nod or chuckle, and a quick switch back to fishing in the Andes and flying down the Amazon from Iquitos. The interview took place in a small parlor of the late eighteenth-century house.

He is a tall man, conspicuously fit. He is round-faced, bald, wears steel-rimmed glasses, and is much younger than he appears to be in recent photographs. Characteristically, his head is pitched forward at a slight angle in an attitude of perpetual attention. He speaks a little nervously and huskily, with a trace of the cultivated accent his schoolmates once thought "foreign." Although it seemed that nothing could ruffle his natural courtesy, he was uncomfortable about what he called "enforced conversation." The tape recorder had something to do with this, but it was more obvious that he simply did not enjoy talking about himself. Hesitations aside, he was completely willing to say exactly what he thought about individuals and events.

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INTERVIEWER

Is this the same farm where you spent your summers as a boy?

DOS PASSOS

This is a different part of the same farm. When my father was alive, we had a house down at the other end, a section that has been sold, which is now part of a little development called Sandy Point, that string of cottages you saw along the shore. We've been here for more than ten years now, but I don't get to spend as much time here as I would like to, because I still have a good deal of unfinished traveling.

INTERVIEWER

Has this polarity between Spence's Point and your traveling had any particular effect on your writing?

DOS PASSOS

I don't know. Of course anything that happens to you has some bearing upon what you write.

INTERVIEWER

Perhaps it once led you to write that the novelist was a truffle dog going ahead of the social historian?

DOS PASSOS

I don't know how true that is. It's the hardest thing in the world to talk about your own work. You stumble along and often the truffle dog doesn't get to eat the truffle... he just picks it up.

INTERVIEWER

Have you become the social historian at the expense of the artist?

DOS PASSOS

There's just no way that I can tell. I have to do what I'm interested in at the time, and I don't think there's anything necessarily inartistic about being the historian. I have great ad-

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miration for good history. All of my work has some certain historical connotation. Take *Three Soldiers*. I was trying to record something that was going on. I always felt that it might not be any good as a novel, but that it would at least be useful to add to the record. I had that idea when I began writing—with *One Man's Initiation*—and I've had it right along.

INTERVIEWER

Always, then, you have been observing for the record?

DOS PASSOS

Very much, I think.

INTERVIEWER

It must have been difficult to remain simply an objective observer.

DOS PASSOS

Possibly, but I think I've tended to come back to center. I'm often carried away by emotions and enthusiasms for various ideas at one time or another, but I think the desire to observe, to put down what you see as accurately as possible, is still paramount. I think the critics never understand that because they always go on the basis that if a man writes about Mormonism he must be a Mormon, that if he writes about Communism he must be Communist, which is not necessarily true. I've usually been on the fence in partisan matters. I've often been partisan for particular people, usually people who seem to be getting a raw deal, but that's a facet I share with many others.

INTERVIEWER

You've said that when you began observing you were a "half-baked young man" out of Harvard. Have you had any recent thoughts about that education?

DOS PASSOS

I got quite a little out of being at Harvard, although I was kicking all of the time I was there, complaining about the

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"ethercone" atmosphere I described in Camera Eye. I probably wouldn't have stayed if it hadn't been for my father, who was anxious for me to go through. At that time, the last of the old New Englanders were still at Harvard. They were really liberal-minded people, pretty thoroughly independent in their ideas, and they all had a sort of basic Protestant ethic behind them. They really knew what was what. I didn't agree with them then, but looking back on them now I think more highly of them than I once did. But that essentially valid cast of mind was very much damaged by the strange pro-Allied and anti-German delusion that swept through them. You couldn't talk to people about it. When the war started in the summer of my sophomore year, I was curious to see it, even though theoretically I disapproved of war as a human activity. I was anxious to see what it was like. Like Charley Anderson in *42nd Parallel*, I wanted to go over before everything "went bellyup." When I got out of college in the summer of 1916, I was anxious to get started in architecture, but at the same time I was so restless that I had already managed to sign myself up in the volunteer ambulance service. My father was determined to put that off, so we kind of compromised on a Spanish expedition and I went to Madrid to study architecture. Then my father died in January of 1917, and I went ahead into the ambulance service. I suppose that World War I then became my university.

INTERVIEWER

Especially because you were in the ambulance service?

DOS PASSOS

...You *saw* the war. I don't know if it was on the more or less seamier side of combat, but in the ambulance service you did have a more objective point of view towards war. After all, the infantryman must be carried away by the spirit of combat, which is quite different from sitting around and dragging off the wreckage.

INTERVIEWER

What remains with you now about the First War—thinking back on it?

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DOS PASSOS

Much of it I don't remember, really because I wrote about it; when you write about something you often never think of it again. I do remember little snatches of experience. The smells. They seem to linger on in the memory—the gas smells, the almond smell of high explosive, latrine and body odors. A terrible time, there has never been such a series of massacres, but all of us were glad to have seen it and survived it. In the ambulance corps, my capacities were largely concerned with driving a car without dumping people into ditches. As for the troops, they had an ambivalent feeling about the corps. Where they saw us in greatest volume was where an attack had been planned and was going to be mounted and a lot of people were going to be killed. They must have thought us a collection of scavenger crows.

INTERVIEWER

Did you go through this time thinking of yourself as a writer?

DOS PASSOS

I never felt I wanted to be a writer...I didn't much like the literary world as I knew it. I studied architecture. I've always been a frustrated architect. But there are certain periods of life when you take in an awful lot of impressions. I kept a good diary—very usual sort of thing—and I was consistent about putting down my impressions. But I had no intention, really, of being a writer then. It may have been Barbusse that got me going. Or more likely something to keep the dry rot from settling in the brain. Robert Hillyer and I began what we called the Great Novel, or more simply the GN. Our schedule then at the front was twenty-four hours on, twenty hours off, and I remember we worked on the novel in a cement tank that protected us from the shelling. We wrote alternate chapters. I sent the manuscript up to the University of Virginia the other day. I didn't dare look at it.

INTERVIEWER

You mention the novels of Barbusse. Was it *Le Feu*, in particular, which made an impression?

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DOS PASSOS

It impressed us a good deal at the time. It was the first of the novels that gave a picture of the massacres of World War I. He had a very good ear for the conversations of those involved. His other things weren't really very much. They were cultish works, like Roland's *Jean-Christophe*, which impressed so many of us in our college days. One had to make a reassessment. I met Barbusse a number of times in Russia afterwards. It was rather horrible: he was a combination of evangelist and Communist and by that time he had become a mere mouthpiece for the Party.

INTERVIEWER

Then, after the war, you were at the Versailles peace conference?

DOS PASSOS

Not really. Sometime in the winter after the armistice they established a thing very much like the G. I. Bill. If you were a college student or a recent graduate, you could go to any university you picked over there, and I picked the Sorbonne. So I was around in Paris, I guess, from February to June of 1919. Of course, that was the peace conference period and I talked to a lot of people connected with it in various ways. Most of them were observers. No, I wasn't taking notes on it.

INTERVIEWER

The question of combining politics and fiction has engaged a good many critics, often drawing from them the notion that it's very difficult to mix the two.

DOS PASSOS

Well, I don't know. Recently, I've been calling my novels contemporary chronicles, which seems to fit them rather better. They have a strong political bent because after all—although it isn't the only thing—politics in our time has pushed people around more than anything else. I don't see why deal-

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ing with politics should harm a writer at all. Despite what he said about politics in the novel being "the pistol shot at the opera," Stendhal also wrote contemporary chronicles. Or look at Thucydides. I don't think his history was at all damaged by the fact that he was a political writer. A lot of very good writing has been more or less involved in politics, although it's always a dangerous territory. It's better for some people to keep out unless they're willing to learn how to observe. It is the occupation of a special kind of writer. His investigation—using blocks of raw experience—must be balanced. Sartre in his straight, plain reporting was wonderful. I can't read him now. A writer in this field should be both engaged and disengaged. He must have passion and concern and anger—but he must keep his emotions at arm's length in his work. If he doesn't, he's simply a propagandist and what he offers is a "preachment."

INTERVIEWER

Let's recall how you observed things when you were among the first American writers to see the results of the Soviet revolution. Did you speak the language?

DOS PASSOS

I learned French at an early age, and Spanish, and Portuguese. I tried Russian, but I didn't do very well with it. I used to get a special kind of headache over their verbs.

INTERVIEWER

Just how impressed were you on those first visits?

DOS PASSOS

My first glimpse of the Red Army was in 1921–22 when I was with the Near East Relief in the Caucasus. At that time it still seemed very hopeful that they would develop something that would be leaning forward instead of backward. You may remember having read in *Orient Express* how hopeful I felt upon observing that the pawnshop in Baku seemed to be going out of business. And, then, probably the period when I was

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in Leningrad and Moscow in 1928 was the time when I was very much on the fence because I tried to avoid politics entirely on that visit. I'd been working with the New Playwrights—Gold, Lawson—in New York, and I was very much interested in the theater. The Russian theater was still quite good, and so there was a great deal to see. I didn't know at that time that its development was just about coming to its end. Often things you think are just beginning are coming to an end. I spent about six months there in 1928. Even then it was a much more open period than any they had since except possibly the early part of the Khrushchev regime. People were still being introduced as Trotskyites although Trotsky was in exile. Stalin hadn't really attained power the way he did after the purges. Most of the Russians I knew then were connected with the theater, and a few of them would shake their fists when they passed his picture. This was in '28. They already hated him. They knew more about him than I did. All those people disappeared in the purges.

INTERVIEWER

Would it be fair to say that at first you thought the Soviet experiment held some sort of promise for the individual?

DOS PASSOS

Yes, I thought it might. I always felt at that time that the Soviets might develop into something like the New England town meeting, but of course they became entirely different, something more like the boss-controlled conventions at home.

INTERVIEWER

What were your literary influences at this time—during the twenties?

DOS PASSOS

The futurists, Ungaretti in Italy in particular. I wasn't taken at all by D'Annunzio. He was a little too rhetorical for my taste. Then I admired Pio Baroja, the Spanish novelist, and Rimbaud, of course, and Stephen Crane, particularly *Maggie*,

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Girl of the Streets, in which Crane has a terribly good ear for conversation and the way people put things.

INTERVIEWER

Did Hemingway read Barbusse?

DOS PASSOS

Not as far as I know. Ernest and I used to read the Bible to each other. He began it. We read separate little scenes. From *Kings, Chronicles*. We didn't make anything out of it—the reading—but Ernest at that time talked a lot about style. He was crazy about Stephen Crane's *The Blue Hotel*. It affected him very much. I was very much taken with him. He took me around to Gertrude Stein's. I wasn't quite at home there. A Buddha sitting up there, surveying us. Ernest was much less noisy then than he was in later life. He felt such people were instructive.

INTERVIEWER

Was Hemingway as occupied with the four-letter word problem as he was later?

DOS PASSOS

He was *always* concerned with four-letter words. It never bothered me particularly. Sex can be indicated with asterisks. I've always felt that was as good a way as any.

INTERVIEWER

Do you think Hemingway's descriptions of those times were accurate in *A Moveable Feast?*

DOS PASSOS

Well, it's a little sour, that book. His treatment of people like Scott Fitzerald — the great man talking down about his contemporaries. He was always competitive and critical, overly so, but in the early days you could kid him out of it. He had a bad heredity. His father was very overbearing apparently. His mother was a very odd woman. I remember once when

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we were in Key West Ernest received a large unwieldy package from her. It had a big, rather crushed cake in it. She had put in a number of things with it, including the pistol with which his father had killed himself. Ernest was terribly upset.

INTERVIEWER

Have you ever had an equivalent sense of competition with your fellow-writers?

DOS PASSOS

No, not at all. I've always thought you should concentrate on paddling your own canoe. Ernest's jealousy of Scott was really embarrassing—because much of it was at a time when Scott was going through a horrible experience in his own life. He was writing stories like *A Diamond As Big As The Ritz*—out of a state of mind which had so little to do with his literary energies.

INTERVIEWER

If we may return to your novels, is characterization particularly difficult in such a novel as *42nd Parallel* where J. Ward Moorehouse, who seems to personify the whole system being indicted, might be taken—I believe he has been taken—as based on Ivy Lee, the man who actually started the field of public relations?

DOS PASSOS

Well, Ivy Lee did have something to do with Moorehouse because I met Ivy Lee in Moscow—I've forgotten what he was doing there—when I was writing the book. We were at the same hotel. I was trying to learn Russian, a very painful process, and so it was quite a relief to find someone to talk English to. I had several rather interesting conversations with him. I think it was in the fall of '28, but I'm not sure what hotel it was. The Metropole? Anyway, I had done the first few chapters of *42nd Parallel* before I went, and then J. Ward Moorehouse was just emerging. I think those conversations with Ivy Lee probably had something to do with his complet-

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ed portrait. Then, also, I knew quite a few advertising men in New York.

INTERVIEWER

I suppose a much more direct characterization of an actual figure occurs in *The Great Days*, doesn't it, with Roger Thurloe modeled as he is on Forrestal?

DOS PASSOS

That's closer to being an effort to produce a characterization of a living person, I think, than most of the others. I had met Forrestal a couple of times, but even so the characterization is pretty far off. I think if I had actually intended to do Forrestal, I would have done him as one of those portraits in *Midcentury*.

INTERVIEWER

Do you find it difficult to read anything written about your work?

DOS PASSOS

I never do, if I can help it. I know it has a bad effect on fellow writers. People sometimes send me articles about myself, and I bundle them off after a while to the University of Virginia for the professors to mull over. Occasionally I look at things, but I've generally managed to avoid stuff written about my work because there just isn't time to fuss with it. I don't think I've lost very much sleep by what you would call the critical reception of my work. I've been very fortunate in a way. If a thing is knocked in one place, somebody else may like it somewhere else. *The Great Days* was very much ignored in this country, but it went quite well in England and in Germany. I wouldn't have been able to make a living without the international market.

INTERVIEWER

What do you think of the considerable disparity between criticisms here and in Europe of your work over the past twenty years, or at least since *U.S.A.* was so well received in both places?

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DOS PASSOS

I haven't followed it very much. I think there are a lot of American critics who try to pretend that I don't exist at all. They haven't read much of the stuff and so they really don't know. When you do historical things, say like *The Men Who Made the Nation*, a totally different set of people review it from those who review so-called fiction. There's this strange schizophrenia in American publishing between fiction and non-fiction, and so people who review non-fiction have never read any of the fiction. It works both ways.

INTERVIEWER

How much of the hostile American reception dated from *Adventures of a Young Man* in 1939, with the cues from left-wing reviewers?

DOS PASSOS

A certain amount, but still *Three Soldiers* was greeted with hostility all the way back in 1921. Of course I think they were wrong on *Adventures of a Young Man* because I don't think my position was so much changed. Politically it was, but from a human point of view I don't think it was so different.

INTERVIEWER

How have these differed in your orientation? The political and the human point of view? In going from *U.S.A.* to *District of Columbia* to *Midcentury*, have you, in effect, gone from big money to big government to big labor?

DOS PASSOS

To a certain extent, I think, yes. At different periods one seems more drastic than the other.

INTERVIEWER

It's a procession which points, perhaps, to this human consistency in your work.

DOS PASSOS

I think it probably does because I think that's what moti-

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vates it. It's a fact that I have tried to look at it from the point of view of the ordinary man, the ordinary woman, struggling to retain some dignity and to make a decent life in these vast organizations.

INTERVIEWER

In almost all of your work, then, there has been some opposition beween individuals and systems?

DOS PASSOS

Always, yes. We've gone through a period when the industrial society has been very rapidly solidified. The Communist way is just one way of solidifying. What it seems to me they have done is to take the capitalist system and kind of freeze it, including a great many of its less agreeable characteristics, freeze it and turn it over completely to bureaucratic control.

INTERVIEWER

I've always wanted to know how *Manhattan Transfer* was written—more than *Three Soldiers* or the other two early novels which more directly follow your experiences. When you wrote *Manhattan Transfer* were you trying to create an entirely new kind of novel? Or were you building from definite precedents?

DOS PASSOS

Three Soldiers had just raised quite a stir and had quite a considerable sale. I seem to remember writing some of *Manhattan Transfer* in Brooklyn, in a room on Columbia Heights that looked out on the harbor. I don't know how this question can be answered. I was trying to get a great many things in to give a picture of the city of New York, because I had spent quite a while there. I was trying also to get a certain feeling in. Precedents? I don't think so. I never went in much for theories of that sort. At the time I did *Manhattan Transfer*, I'm not sure whether I had seen Eisenstein's films. The idea of montage had an influence on the development on this sort of wiring. I may have seen "Potemkin." Then, of course, I must have seen

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"The Birth of a Nation," which was the first attempt at montage. Eisenstein considered it the origin of his method. I don't know if there were any particular origins for *Manhattan Transfer* in my reading. *Vanity Fair* isn't at all like it but I'd read *Vanity Fair* a great deal, and I'd read eighteenth-century English stuff. Perhaps *Tristram Shandy* has certain connections. It's all subjective, while, in my stuff, I was trying to be all objective. Sterne made up his narrative out of a great many different things. It doesn't seem to have much cohesion, but if you read the whole book it adds up to a very cohesive picture.

INTERVIEWER

What about the reception of *Manhattan Transfer*?

DOS PASSOS

One critic called it "an explosion in a sewer." Probably the person who helped the book most was Sinclair Lewis, who wrote a very favorable review.

INTERVIEWER

What sort of plan did you have for *U.S.A.* when you began writing it?

DOS PASSOS

I was trying to develop what I had started, possibly somewhat unconsciously, in *Manhattan Transfer*. By that time I was really taken with the idea of montage. I had tried it out in *Manhattan Transfer*—using pieces of popular songs. By the time it evolved into such compartments as the camera eye of the *U.S.A.* trilogy it served a useful function—which in that case was to distill my subjective feelings about the incidents and people described. My hope was to achieve the objective approach of a Fielding, or a Flaubert, particularly as one sees it in Flaubert's letters, which are remarkable. In the biographies, in the newsreels, and even the narrative, I aimed at total objectivity by giving conflicting views—using the camera eye as a safety valve for my own subjective feelings. It made objectivity in the rest of the book much easier.

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INTERVIEWER

You eventually closed down the camera eye—though *Midcentury* is the same as *U.S.A.* in its other formal aspects.

DOS PASSOS

After a while, you feel more in control of your subjective feelings. I didn't think that I needed it by then.

INTERVIEWER

Was *U.S.A.* a trilogy to begin with?

DOS PASSOS

No, it started to be one book but then there was so much that I wanted to get in that it got to be three books very soon ...before *42nd Parallel* was finished.

INTERVIEWER

Did you begin with the idea of just taking the years up to the war?

DOS PASSOS

No, I had the basic idea for the whole thing. It started with what I didn't then call a contemporary chronicle; I do call it that now because it seems a useful label. I think, if I can remember back, I started *42nd Parallel* with the idea of publishing a series of reportages of the times. I don't think I thought of the book as any sort of a novel. I thought of it as a series of reportages in which characters appeared and re-appeared. It was to cover quite a long period.

INTERVIEWER

I've often wondered why some of them, like Richard Ellsworth Savage or Vag, didn't reappear in *District of Columbia* or *Midcentury*.

DOS PASSOS

I decided to try to close that group down. You have to make a fresh start every now and then.

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INTERVIEWER

How did you come to add the portraits to *U.S.A*? Did you get much editorial advice on this book?

DOS PASSOS

Eugene Saxton, first at Doran and then at Harpers, was a very friendly editor, but I don't think anybody gave me any advice. If they did, I doubt if I took it—I guess because I've been very hard to convince. I've always been very grateful for what they've been able to point out about misspellings and bad construction, but as far as the *gist* of things is concerned I've not been much moved. It's awfully hard to say how I came to add the portraits. I was trying to get different facets of my subject and trying to get something a little more accurate than fiction, at the same time to work these pieces into the fictional picture. The aim was always to produce fiction. That's why I was completely unable to understand the fiction, non-fiction dichotomy. I was sort of on the edge between them, moving from one field to the other very rapidly.

INTERVIEWER

Critics might drop labels altogether when they take up *U.S.A.*?

DOS PASSOS

It would be a good idea to look at it a little more objectively without pre-conceived ideas. That wouldn't mean that they would necessarily have to like it, but I think they would have a better basis for criticism.

INTERVIEWER

In connection with research, is a social life with literary people useful?

DOS PASSOS

Almost never. I hear a good deal more non-literary conversation. Certainly useful to me in my line of work. I read

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very little. Yet the language does change—mostly through television and teenage jargon—and it's very hard to keep up with it. Knowing a younger generation helps. An academic community is pretty dreary, but the students, of course, are an interesting quantity. They come down from the University of Virginia and deliver themselves of the current doctrine. As do my daughter and stepson. It's very valuable. Word of mouth provides the great texture, not research.

INTERVIEWER

Incidentally, what is your opinion of the students of the New Left?

DOS PASSOS

Many of them seem to be going through something rather like a tantrum. An odd paranoia sweeping the country, I don't know exactly why...a mass hysteria...a combination of the St. Vitus dance of medieval times and the Children's Crusade...

INTERVIEWER

What about other forms of activity? In the twenties you maintained a great interest in the theater.

DOS PASSOS

The theater didn't suit me really. I can't sit up all night. Everything in the theater is done after midnight. I lived in Brooklyn at the time, and we always finished so late that I had to walk back home across the Brooklyn Bridge. I never got home before three A.M. and being someone who's never been able to sleep later than seven in the morning, I just couldn't keep up the schedule.

INTERVIEWER

Did you ever run across Hart Crane on those walks?

DOS PASSOS

He was very much a night animal. I used to try to get him to go home to his bed for a change. I'd get him there all right but then he'd hide in the entry and dart out again.

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INTERVIEWER

He used to prod his creative impulse by writing to the noise of a phonograph turned up full volume.

DOS PASSOS

Yes, I've heard that. For me it would be too distracting... pleasure and pain equally divided. I find that simpler things get me going—diaries, for instance, especially if they turn up in old trunks...

INTERVIEWER

What is your ideal set of working conditions?

DOS PASSOS

All you need is a room without any particular interruptions. Some things I've done entirely in longhand, but now I tend to start chapters in longhand and then finish them on the typewriter, and that becomes such a mess that nobody can transcribe it except my wife. I find it easier to get up early in the morning, and I like to get through by one or two o'clock. I don't do very much in the afternoon. I like to get out-of-doors then if I can.

INTERVIEWER

You get all of your work done before you go swimming?

DOS PASSOS

Yes. Down here that's my regular routine

INTERVIEWER

How much revising do you go through?

DOS PASSOS

I do a lot of revising. Certain chapters six or seven times. Occasionally you can hit it right the first time. More often, you don't. George Moore rewrote entire novels. In my own case I usually write to a point where the work is getting worse rather than better. That's the point to stop and the time to publish.

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INTERVIEWER

How did *District of Columbia* become a trilogy?

DOS PASSOS

Adventures of a Young Man came by itself and the Spottswood family seemed to need more development. I began with the younger brother, went on to the older brother, and finished with the father. It worked out backwards.

INTERVIEWER

Was Glenn Spottswood's predicament in *Adventures of a Young Man* anything like your own in the later thirties? By his predicament I mean Glenn's feeling that he had been deceived while he worked on the Harlan County Defense Committee, the Scottsboro Boys Defense Committee, all of his encounters with the Communists.

DOS PASSOS

I wouldn't have known about conditions in Harlan County or what was behind either Defense Committee if I hadn't been through those experiences. I wouldn't have known how to describe them. Of course, I think you always have to have a little seed of personal experience, although it's often a very small seed, to produce the real verisimilitude which is what you are looking for.

INTERVIEWER

In *Number One*, the novel about Glenn's older brother Tyler, there is an account of the third term convention. Had you admired Roosevelt before that occasion?

DOS PASSOS

Yes, I certainly did. I thought he did very well all of his first term. I voted for him a second term, and then I regret to say that I voted for him for his third term. Now I think it would probably have been better for the country if Willkie had been elected, if anybody else had been elected, because it would have broken up the continuity of Roosevelt's extraordinary

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machine in Washington. I think Roosevelt would have come down as a really great president if he had only served two terms. I think he had done all the good he had in him and there was only harm left. In that third term, the consolidation of the federal government really was the rebirth of bureaucracy, which had shown its head under Wilson and then faded away. That's what *The Grand Design* is about.

INTERVIEWER

It seemed to me that Roosevelt dominated that book, if not all of *District of Columbia*, in much the same way that Wilson did *1919*.

DOS PASSOS

I think so, although I fairly intentionally kept him behind the scenes. At that time I had done quite a bit of reporting around Washington. Reporting has always been an important part of my career. Between books, I've always done a few reporting jobs.

INTERVIEWER

One political question seems inescapable. In many of your books since the war, you write of the "abominable snowman" of international Communism, of having been among the first to see him, and having kept on seeing him through all of the crises, alliances, and thaws. Do you see him as clearly today?

DOS PASSOS

It's very hard to tell. It's almost impossible to have any view of present-day international politics without having a double standard of judgment. Our development and that of the Soviet Union have many things in common, except that the Soviet Union is motivated by this tremendous desire for world conquest, more active sometimes and at other times less active. It may be that the people of Russia are not very much motivated by this passion for expansion any more. I'm not sure whether they ever were. I would like to know. I mean I don't think

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the mass of people is motivated at all because it's so hard for them to reach any conclusion. They are doped with ideology.

INTERVIEWER

Have you ever thought of going back there to check on it?

DOS PASSOS

It would be hard to. There might come a time when it would be interesting to go to Russia, but I don't think that time has come yet. I think there are certain phases of the development of Russian society which are on our side. Some Russians might be among our best allies, because some of them really want much the same things that we do. But those particular people are helpless in the bureaucratic set-up. Pasternak was a good example, I think, with his curious book, *Doctor Zhivago*. It seemed so much a voice from the past, like something of Turgenev's coming back to life. It was very attractive to me because it showed a side of the Russian people which I've had great sympathy with. It showed that that side of the Russian mind, that nineteenth-century humanism, still existed. Of course, Pasternak was quite an old man. Still, as long as they teach people to read and write and allow them to read nineteenth century Russian literature, there are going to be more Pasternaks.

INTERVIEWER

Do you read many contemporary American writers?

DOS PASSOS

I don't get time for very much because I do so much reading of a research type in connection with things I am doing—documents. It's very hard for me to get time. I read Salinger with a great deal of pleasure, and I mention him simply because he has given me pleasure. *The Catcher in the Rye* and *Frannie and Zooey* were very entertaining books. I read a certain amount of Faulkner, and I'm very, very fond of some of his writing. "The Bear" and *As I Lay Dying*. "The Bear" is a marvelous hunting story. I liked *Intruder in the Dust*. He re-

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minds me very much of the old storytellers I used to listen to down here when I visited summers as a boy, when I would hide in the shadows so that I wouldn't be sent off to bed. I'd listen till my ears would burst. I suppose what I like best in Faulkner is the detail. He is a remarkably accurate observer and builds his narratives—which sometimes strike me as turgid—out of the marvelous raw material of what he has seen.

INTERVIEWER

And Cummings' poetry?

DOS PASSOS

Oh, I've always enjoyed Cummings' poetry. I was very fond of Cummings personally. He was in college at the same time I was, I think a class ahead of me, and I saw quite a little bit of him there. We always met on much the same terms, although sometimes a year would go by when I didn't see him. He was the last of the great New Englanders.

INTERVIEWER

How does the work of some of the more committed left-wing writers of the thirties seem to you now? Michael Gold and Howard Fast, for example.

DOS PASSOS

Somebody credited me with a wisecrack about that time: Writers of the world unite, you have nothing to lose but your brains. Mike Gold wrote quite well. His first book, *Jews Without Money*, was a warm, human thing, very much influenced by Gorky, whom Gold admired greatly. Fast never interested me. His book on Tom Paine irritated me very much because I thought he completely falsified the picture. Generally, though, the writers who became CP members either stopped writing or became so boring nobody could read them.

INTERVIEWER

Have you known any of the Communist politicians, rather than the writers?

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DOS PASSOS

I had a long conversation with Earl Browder, to whom I took a great dislike. He was a horrible fellow. I've met Foster and didn't dislike him.

INTERVIEWER

Did you discover a great disparity between Browder and Foster, on the one hand, and John Reed on the other?

DOS PASSOS

Of course, I had a great deal of sympathy with John Reed. I thought he wrote very well, and I think I liked his writings better than I did him. The only time I ever met him he was giving a talk, maybe about Mexico. It was at Harvard when I was an undergraduate. There was something indefinably Harvard Brahmin in his manner that threw me off at the time. I was a very intolerant young man in a bashful and retiring sort of way in those days. I hated college boys. From what Louise Bryant said privately, I suspect that John Reed was pretty discouraged before he died.

INTERVIEWER

Have *you* been more optimistic about the world situation in the last five years or less so?

DOS PASSOS

It would be hard to say. I think I have probably become more so as I get older and a little less passionately involved, but then when they pull something like the operation in the Bay of Pigs, I become extremely pessimistic, particularly when nobody seems to understand its significance.

INTERVIEWER

What do you think of the academic treatment of modern literature?

DOS PASSOS

It seems to be rather confused, although I haven't followed it very much. The academic community is more likely to

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suffer from mass delusions than the general public. I don't know exactly why, but I suppose it's always been the case.

INTERVIEWER

Do you feel that your own most recent writing is generally misunderstood in this country?

DOS PASSOS

I wouldn't say that. Some people misunderstand it, naturally. They always will. It would be absurd to expect them to understand things. Also, if you deal with matters that touch people, you must expect to cause pain; particularly, if you hit at some target that is close to the truth. It always causes pain, agony. Naturally, they resent it.

INTERVIEWER

Have you ever thought that you have what has been called a Wayne Morse complex, an unwillingness to go along with a major party or major tendency?

DOS PASSOS

There is a type of mind that does tend to say, as Ibsen did, that the minority is always right. Perhaps I agree with Ibsen in that.

INTERVIEWER

Have you tried other artistic forms? Poetry, for instance.

DOS PASSOS

I did quite a lot of that. . .but it took a different form. . .it got into certain rhythmic passages in *U.S.A.* I do a little painting, a water color or so. The prose can get too high-colored; a water color gets that drained off.

INTERVIEWER

Do you enjoy writing?

DOS PASSOS

That depends. Sometimes I do and sometimes I don't.

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INTERVIEWER

What is its particular pleasure?

DOS PASSOS

Well, you get a great deal off your chest—emotions, impressions, opinions. Curiosity urges you on—the driving force. What is collected must be got rid of. That's one thing to be said about writing. There is a great sense of relief in a fat volume.

—DAVID SANDERS

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Notes on Contributors

Interview

David Sanders, an Associate Professor of English at Harvey Mudd College, is preparing a critical study of John Dos Passos

Art

René Bertholo, a Portuguese painter, has had shows of painting and sculpture in Paris, Copenhagen and Amsterdam.

Jean Dewasne represented France in the 1968 Venice Biennale. His 100-yard-long painting, "The Long March," was recently shown in Paris at the Musée d'Art Moderne and in Brussels at the Palais des Beaux Arts.

Fiction

Keith Cohen's stories have appeared in *The Columbia Review* and *Art & Literature*. "The Balustrade" is Part IV of his novel of the same name.

Thomas M. Disch's fourth science-fiction novel, *Camp Concentration*, was published recently by Doubleday & Co., who will bring out a collection of stories, *Fun With Your Head*, in December.

Philip Metcalfe attended Amherst College, and is now an "Unclassified-5" at the University of Washington in Seattle.

Robin Metz teaches at Knox College in Illinois, and is completing a novel, *The World on a String*, to be published by Random House.

Poetry

Ted Berrigan is teaching at the Writer's Workshop of the University of Iowa. Corinth Books recently published his *Many Happy Returns*.

Clark Coolidge's poems in this issue are from a book-length series still in progress. His most recent publication is *Ing* (Angel Hair Books).

Larry Fagin is the editor of *Adventures in Poetry*. He has published *The Parade of Caterpillars* (Angel Hair Books).

Kenneth Koch is the author of *Ko, or a Season on Earth*, *Thank You and Other Poems*, and *Bertha and Other Plays*. His next book, *The Pleasures of Peace*, will be published this spring.

Greg Kuzma's poems have appeared in many little magazines.

Lewis MacAdams is promotion director of Vanguard-Apostolic Records. His most recent publication is *Water Charms*, a long poem.

Ron Padgett is co-editor of an anthology of New York poets to be published by Random House. Holt, Rinehart and Winston will bring out a book of his poems this year.

Aram Saroyan is the author of a collection of poems entitled *Aram Saroyan*. *Pages* will soon be published by Random House.

Lewis Warsh is co-editor of Angel Hair magazine and books. He is the author of two volumes of poems, *The Suicide Rates* and *Moving Through Air*.

Philip Whalen's collected poems will be published by Harcourt Brace in conjunction with Coyote books.

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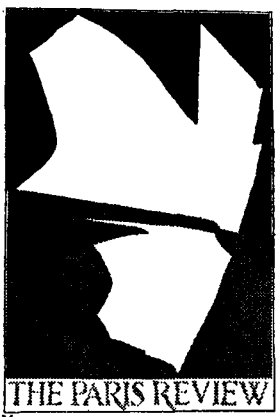

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